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Works of the late reverend
William Romaine

WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND

WILLIAM ROMAINE, A. M.

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SAINT ANDREW BY THE WARDROBE,

AND

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AND LECTURER OF

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A

TREATISE

UPON THE

LIFE OF FAITH.

FROM THE AUTHOR's CORRECTED COPY.

The Juſt ſhall live by his Faith. Hab. ii. 4.

Entered at Stationers Hall.

AUTHOR's PREFACE.

THE design of this little treatise is to display the glory and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage weak believers to glorify him more by depending and living more upon his all-sufficiency. Whatever grace he has promised in his word, he is faithful, and he is almighty to bestow, and they may receive it of him freely by the hand of faith. This is its use and office, as an hand or instrument, having first received Christ, to be continually receiving out of Christ's fulness. The apostle calls this "living by faith," a life received and continued, with all the strength, comforts, and blessings, belonging to it, by faith in the Son of God, and he also mentions the work of faith, its working effectually in the hearts and lives of believers, through Christ strengthening them, and its growing in them, yea growing exceedingly from faith to faith, by the power of him who loveth them. This is the subject; and it properly

belongs to thoſe only who have obtained the true faith, given them of God, and wrought in their hearts by his Word and Spirit. Such perſons meet with many difficulties every day to try their faith, and to hinder them from depending continually upon the Lord Chriſt for all things belonging to life and godlineſs. By what means theſe difficulties may be overcome is plainly taught in ſcripture, is clearly promiſed, and is attained by faith, which becomes daily more victorious, as it is enabled to truſt, that he is faithful who promiſed. The ſtrengthening of it I have had all along in view, hoping to be the means, under God, of leading the weak believer by the hand, and of removing hinderances out of his way, until the Lord thoroughly ſettle and eſtabliſh him in the faith that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

But I muſt admoniſh the reader, that I do not expect this merely from what I have written. It is too high and great a work for any mere man. Faith is the gift of God. And he alone who gives it, can increaſe it. The author of the faith is alſo the finiſher of it: and we do not uſe the means to ſet the Lord of all means aſide. No. We uſe them

them that we may find him in them. It is his preſence, which makes the uſe of them effectual. By this, and this only can any reader of this little book be rendered ſtronger in faith. Being well aſſured of this, I have therefore looked up to him myſelf, and it will be for thy profit alſo, reader, to look up to him in prayer, for his bleſſing. Entreat him of his grace to countenance this feeble attempt to promote his glory and his people's good. Beg of him to make thy reading of it the means of thy growth in faith, and to accompany it with the ſupply of his Holy Spirit to every believer into whoſe hands it may fall. And forget not in thy prayers and praiſes to remember the author.

I bleſs God who has enabled me to reviſe the preſs, and to put my laſt hand to the work, by making ſuch additions and alterations, as ſeemed to me neceſſary, to render the ſubject more plain to common readers. In this, and in all things, I deſire to approve myſelf to my Lord and Maſter, whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve, and whatever good I have or do, to him be all the praiſe. Bleſſed be his Name this day, henceforth, and through the day of eternity.

A

TREATISE,

&c. &c.

THE perſons, for whoſe uſe this little tract is drawn up, are ſuppoſed to be practically acquainted with theſe following truths: they have been convinced of ſin, and convinced of righteouſneſs. The word of God has been made effectual by the application of the Holy Spirit to teach them the nature of the divine law, and upon comparing their hearts and their lives with it, they have been brought in guilty. They found themſelves fallen creatures, and they felt the ſad conſequences of the fall, namely, total ignorance in the underſtanding of God and his ways, an open rebellion againſt him in the will, and an entire enmity in the heart, a life ſpent in the ſervice of the world, the fleſh, and the devil; and on all theſe accounts guilty before God, and by nature children of wrath. When they were convinced of thoſe truths in their judgments, and the awakened

awakened conſcience ſought for eaſe and deliverance, then they found they were helpleſs and without ſtrength. They could take no ſtep, nor do any thing, which could in the leaſt ſave them from their ſins. Whatever method they thought of, it failed them upon trial, and left conſcience more uneaſy than before. Did they purpoſe to repent? They found ſuch a repentance, as God would be pleaſed with, was the gift of Chriſt. He was exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance. Suppoſe they thought of reforming their lives, yet what is to become of their old ſins? Will preſent obedience, if it could be perfectly paid, make any atonement for paſt diſobedience? Will the broken law take part of our duty for the whole? No. It has determined, that whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And let him be ever ſo careful in doing what the law requires, or in avoiding what the law forbids, let him faſt and pray and give alms, hear and read the word, be early and late at ordinances, yet the enlightened conſcience cannot be herewith ſatisfied: becauſe by theſe duties he cannot undo the ſin committed, and becauſe he will find ſo many failings in them, that they will be ſtill adding to his guilt and increaſing his miſery.

What method then ſhall he take? The more he ſtrives to make himſelf better, the worſe he finds himſelf. He ſees the pollution of ſin greater.

He diſcovers more of its guilt. He finds in himſelf a want of all good, and an inclination to all evil. He is now convinced, that the law is holy, juſt, and good, but when he would keep it, evil is preſent with him. This makes him deeply ſenſible of his guilty helpleſs ſtate, and ſhews him that by the works of the law he cannot be ſaved. His heart, like a fountain, is continually ſending forth evil thoughts, yea the very imaginations of it are only and altogether evil, and words and works partake of the nature of that evil fountain from whence they flow: ſo that after all his efforts he cannot quiet his conſcience, nor attain peace with God.

The law having done its office, as a ſchoolmaſter, by convincing him of theſe truths, ſtops his mouth that he has not a word to ſay, why ſentence ſhould not be paſſed upon him. And there it leaves him, guilty and helpleſs. It can do nothing more for him, than ſhew him that he is a child of wrath, and that he deſerves to have the wrath of God abiding upon him for ever: for by the law is the knowledge of ſin.

The goſpel finds him in this condition, as the good Samaritan did the wounded traveller, and brings him good news. It diſcovers to him the way of ſalvation contrived in the covenant of grace, and manifeſts to him what the ever bleſſed Trinity had therein purpoſed, and what in the fulneſs

fulneſs of time was accompliſhed. That all the perfections of the Godhead might be infinitely and everlaſtingly glorified, the Father covenanted to gain honour and dignity to his law and juſtice, to his faithfulneſs and holineſs, by inſiſting upon man's appearing at his bar in the perfect righteouſneſs of the law. But man having no ſuch righteouſneſs of his own, all having ſinned, and there being none righteous, no not one; how can he be ſaved? The Lord Chriſt, a perſon in the Godhead coequal and coeternal with the Father, undertook to be his Saviour. He covenanted to ſtand up as the head and ſurety of his people in their nature and in their ſtead, to obey for them, that by his infinitely precious obedience many might be made righteous, and to ſuffer for them, that by his everlaſting meritorious ſtripes they might be healed. Accordingly in the fulneſs of time he came into the world, and was made fleſh, and God and man being as truly united in one perſon, as the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man. This adorable perſon lived, and ſuffered and died, as the repreſentative of his people. The righteouſneſs of his life was to be their right and title to life, and the righteouſneſs of his ſufferings and death was to ſave them from all the ſufferings due to their ſins. And thus the law and juſtice of the Father would be glorified in pardoning them, and his faithfulneſs

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and holineſs made honourable in ſaving them. He might be ſtrictly juſt, and yet the juſtifier of him who believeth in Jeſus.

In this covenant the holy Spirit, a perſon co-equal and coeternal with the Father and the Son, undertook the gracious office of quickening and convincing ſinners in their conſciences, how guilty they were, and how much they wanted a Saviour, and in their judgments how able he was to ſave all that come unto God thro' him, and in their hearts to receive him, and to believe unto righteouſneſs, and then in their walk and converſation to live upon his grace and ſtrength. His office is thus deſcribed by our bleſſed Lord, in *John* xvi. 13, 14. "When the Spirit of truth "is come he ſhall glorify me; for he ſhall take "of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you;" that is, when he comes to convince ſinners of ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment, he takes of the things of Chriſt, and glorifies him by ſhewing them what a fulneſs there is in him to ſave. He leads them into all neceſſary truth in their judgments, both concerning their own ſinfulneſs, guilt, and helpleſſneſs, and alſo concerning the almighty power of the God-man, and his lawful authority to make uſe of it for their ſalvation. He opens their underſtandings to comprehend the covenant of grace, and the offices of the eternal Trinity in this covenant, particularly the office of the ſinner's ſurety the Lord Chriſt, and

he convinces them that there is righteouſneſs, and ſtrength, comfort and rejoicing, grace for grace, holineſs and glory, yea treaſures infinite, everlaſting treaſures of theſe in Chriſt, and hereby he draws out their affections after Chriſt, and enables them with the heart to believe in him unto righteouſneſs. And the Holy Spirit having thus brought them to the happy knowledge of their union with Chriſt, afterwards glorifies him in their walk and converſation, by teaching them how to live by faith upon his fulneſs, and to be continually receiving out of it grace for grace according to their continual needs.

The corruption of our nature by the fall, and our recovery through Jeſus Chriſt, are the two leading truths in the chriſtian religion, and I ſuppoſe the perſons for whoſe ſake this little tract is drawn up not only to know them, but alſo to be eſtabliſhed in them, ſtedfaſtly to believe and deeply to experience them. The neceſſity of their being well grounded in them is very evident: for a ſinner will never ſeek after nor deſire Chriſt, farther than he feels his guilt and his miſery; nor will he receive Chriſt by faith, till all other methods of ſaving himſelf fail; nor will he live upon Chriſt's fulneſs farther than he has an abiding ſenſe of his own want of him. Reader, How do theſe truths appear to thee? Has the law of God arraigned thee in thy conſcience? Haſt thou been there brought

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in guilty, and has the Spirit of God deeply convinced thee by the law of ſin, and of unbelief, and of thy helpleſſneſs, ſo as to leave thee no falſe reſting place ſhort of Chriſt? Has he ſwept away every refuge of lies? and thus put thee upon enquiring what thou muſt do to be ſaved. If not; may the Lord the Spirit convince thee, and in his own good time bring thee to the knowledge of thyſelf, and to the ſaving knowledge of and belief in Chriſt Jeſus, without which this book can profit thee nothing. But if thou haſt been thus convinced, and the Lord has ſhone into thy underſtanding, and enlightened it with the knowledge of the way of ſalvation, then read on. May the Lord make what thou readeſt profitable to thine eſtabliſhment in the faith, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

There are two things ſpoken of faith in ſcripture, which highly deſerve the attention of every true believer. The firſt is the ſtate of ſafety, in which he is placed by Chriſt, and is delivered from every evil and danger in time and in eternity, to which ſin had juſtly expoſed him; and the ſecond is the happineſs of this ſtate, conſiſting in an abundant ſupply of all ſpiritual bleſſings freely given to him in Chriſt, and received, as they are wanted, by the hand of faith out of the fulneſs of Chriſt. By which means whoever has obtained this precious faith ought to have a quiet conſcience at peace with God, and need

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not fear any manner of evil, how much ſoever it be deſerved, and thereby he may at all times come boldly to the throne of grace to receive whatever is neceſſary for his comfortable walk heaven-wards. Every grace, every bleſſing promiſed in ſcripture, is his, and he may and does enjoy them ſo far as he lives by faith upon the Son of God: ſo far his life and converſation are well ordered, his walk is even, his ſpiritual enemies are conquered, the old man is mortified with his affections and luſts, and the new man is renewed day by day after the image of God in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. And from what he already enjoys by faith, and from the hopes of a ſpeedy and perfect enjoyment, the ſcripture warrants him to rejoice in the Lord with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

It is much to be lamented, that few live up to theſe two privileges of faith. Many perſons who are truly concerned about the ſalvation of their ſouls, live for years together full of doubts and fears, and are not eſtabliſhed in the faith, that is in Chriſt Jeſus; and ſeveral who are in a good meaſure eſtabliſhed, yet do not walk happily in an even courſe, nor experience the continual bleſſedneſs of receiving by faith a ſupply of every want out of the Saviour's fulneſs. Theſe things I have long obſerved, and what I have been taught of them from the ſcripture, and from the good hand of God upon me, I have

have put together, and throw it as a mite into the treaſury. I am ſure it was never more wanted, than at preſent. May the good Lord accept the poor offering, and bleſs it to the hearts of his dear people to the praiſe of the glory of his own grace.

For the clearer underſtanding of what ſhall be ſpoken upon the life of faith, it will be needful to conſider firſt what faith is: for a man muſt have faith before he can make uſe of it. He muſt be in Chriſt, before he can live upon Chriſt. Now faith ſignifies the believing the truth of the word of God: ſo ſays Chriſt, "Thy word is truth:" it relates to ſome word ſpoken or to ſome promiſe made by him, and it expreſſes the belief which a perſon who hears it has of its being true. He aſſents to it, relies upon it, and acts accordingly. This is faith. And the whole word of God, which is the ground of faith, may be reduced to two points, namely, to what the law reveals concerning the juſtification of a righteous man, and to what the goſpel reveals concerning the ſalvation of a ſinner. A ſhort examination of theſe points will diſcover to us a great number of perſons, who have no faith at all in the word of God.

Firſt, Every man in his natural ſtate before the grace of Chriſt, and the inſpiration of his Spirit has no faith. The ſcripture ſays, God hath ſhut up all that are in this ſtate in unbelief;

and when the Holy Spirit, awakens any one of them, he convinces him of ſin, and of unbelief in particular. When the comforter is come, ſays Chriſt, he ſhall convince the world of ſin, becauſe they believe not in me.

Secondly, a man who lives careleſs in ſin has no faith. He does not believe one word that God ſays in his law. Let it warn him of his guilt, and ſhew him his great danger, yet he ſets at nought the terrors of the Lord. He acts as if there was no day of judgment, and no place of eternal torments. He has no fear of God before his eyes. How can ſuch a practical atheiſt as this have any faith?

Thirdly, The formaliſt has not true faith. He is content with the form of godlineſs, and denies the power of it. The veil of unbelief is upon his heart, and the pride of his own good works and duties is ever before his eyes, that he finds no want of the ſalvation of Jeſus, and is averſe to the grace of the goſpel. All his hopes ariſe from what he is in himſelf, and from what he is able to do for himſelf. He neither believes God ſpeaking in the law, nor in the goſpel. If he believed his word in the law, it would convict him of ſin, and forbid him to go about to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of his own; becauſe by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh living be juſtified, yet this he does not believe. If he believed the word of God in the goſpel, it would convince

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him of righteouſneſs, of an infinitely perfect righteouſneſs wrought out by the Godman Chriſt Jeſus, and imputed to the ſinner without any works of his own: for unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that juſtifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteouſneſs. To this he dare not truſt wholly for his acceptance before God, therefore he has not true faith.

Fourthly, A man may be ſo far enlightened as to underſtand the way of ſalvation, and yet have not true faith. This is a poſſible caſe. The apoſtle ſtates it, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2. "Though I "underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge, "yet I may be nothing." And it is a dangerous caſe, as *Heb.* x. 26. "If we ſin wilfully after "that we have received the knowledge of "the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice "for ſins." Here was ſuch a knowledge of the truth, as left a man to periſh without the benefit of Chriſt's ſacrifice, therefore he wanted that faith, which whoſoever hath ſhall be ſaved.

What great numbers are there under theſe deluſions? Reader, art thou one of them? Examine cloſely; for it is of eternal moment. Prove thine own ſelf, whether thou be in the faith. If thou aſkeſt how thou ſhalt know it, ſince there are ſo many errors about it? hear what God's word ſays, Whoever believes truly has been firſt convinced of unbelief. This our Lord

teaches, *John* xvi. 9. "When the comforter is come, "he will convince the world of ſin, becauſe they "believe not on me. He convinces of ſin, by enlightening the underſtanding to know the exceeding ſinfulneſs of it, and by quickening the conſcience to feel the guilt of it. He ſhews the miſery threatened, and leaves ſinners no falſe refuge to flee unto. He will not ſuffer them to ſit down content with ſome ſorrow, or a little outward reformation, or any ſuppoſed righteouſneſs, but makes them feel that do whatever they will or can, ſtill their guilt remains. Thus he puts them upon ſeeking out for ſalvation, and by the goſpel he diſcovers it to them. He opens their underſtandings to know what they hear, and read, concerning the covenant of the eternal Trinity, and concerning what the God-man has done in the fulfilling of this covenant. The Holy Spirit teaches them the nature of the adorable perſon of Chriſt-God manifeſt in the fleſh, and the infinitely precious and everlaſting meritorious righteouſneſs, which he has wrought out by the obedience of his life and death; and he convinces them, that this righteouſneſs is ſufficient for their ſalvation, and that nothing is required except faith, for its being imputed unto them; and he works in them a ſenſe of their being helpleſs and without ſtrength to rely upon this righteouſneſs, and through faith in it to have peace with God. He makes them ſee, that they cannot,

cannot, by any power of their own, in the leaſt depend upon it: for all their ſufficiency is of God. It requires the ſame arm of the Lord, which wrought out this righteouſneſs, to enable them with the heart to believe in it. They are made clearly ſenſible of this from the word and Spirit of God, and from their own daily experience, and thereby they are diſpoſed to receive their whole ſalvation from the free grace of God, and to him to aſcribe all the glory of it. Theſe are the redeemed of the Lord, to whom it is given to believe. They are quickened from a death in treſpaſſes and ſins, their conſciences are awakened, their underſtandings are enlightened with the knowledge of Chriſt, they are enabled in their wills to chooſe him, and in their hearts to love him, and to rejoice in his ſalvation. This is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit: for faith is his gift, *Eph.* ii. 8. Unto you it is given, ſays the apoſtle, *Phil.* i. 29. in the behalf of Chriſt to believe on him; none can give it but the Spirit of God: becauſe it is the faith of the operation of God, and requires the ſame almighty power to believe with the heart, as it did to raiſe Chriſt's body from the grave, *Eph.* i. 20. And this power he puts forth in the preaching of the word, and makes it the power of God unto ſalvation. The word is called, 2 *Cor.* iii. 8. the miniſtration of the Spirit, becauſe by it the Spirit miniſters his grace and ſtrength.

So

So *Gal.* iii. 2. "Received ye the Spirit by the "works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" It was by hearing faith preached, that they received the Spirit: for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, which is therefore called the word of faith. And thus the word is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, to diſpoſe the hearts of thoſe who hear it, to receive and to embrace Chriſt; whereby they attain the righteouſneſs of faith, as *Rom.* x. 10. "With the heart man believeth unto righteouſ-"neſs." The heart is the chief thing in believing: for into it Chriſt is received, and in it he dwells by faith. The vital union between Chriſt and the believer is manifeſted and made known in the heart, and therein it is cemented and eſtabliſhed. With joy can the believer ſay, "My Beloved is mine, and I am his," happy for me, we are but one perſon in the eye of the law, and our intereſts are but one. Bleſſed ſtate this! Chriſt gives himſelf freely to the believer, who alſo gives himſelf up in faith to Chriſt. Chriſt as the believer's ſurety has taken his ſins upon himſelf, and the believer takes Chriſt's righteouſneſs: for Chriſt makes over all that he has to the believer, who by faith looks upon it and makes uſe of it as his own; according to that expreſs warrant for his ſo doing in 1 *Cor.* iii. 22, 23. All things are yours, becauſe ye belong to Chriſt.

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This vital union, between Chriſt and the believer, is largely treated of in ſcripture. Chriſt thus ſpeaks of it in his prayer for his people, *John* xvii. "I pray for them who ſhall believe "on me through their word, that they all may "be one, as thou father art in me, and I in thee, "that they alſo may be one in us. I in them, "and thou in me, that they may be made per-"fect in one." And in *John* vi. 56. he ſays, "He, that eateth my fleſh, and drinketh my "blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;" and this indwelling is by faith, as *Eph.* iii. 17. "That "Chriſt may dwell in your hearts by faith." And it is the office of the Holy Spirit to manifeſt this union to their hearts, as *John* xiv. 20. "At "that day, when the Spirit of truth is come, "ye ſhall know that I am in my Father, and "you in me, and I in you." And beſides theſe and many other plain words, this union is alſo repreſented by ſeveral ſtriking images, ſuch as that of huſband and wife, who are in law, but one perſon, the huſband being anſwerable for the wife's debts, and the wife ſharing in her huſband's honours and goods. It is ſet forth by the union between a building and the foundation upon which it ſtands ſecure; between a tree and its branches, which live becauſe they are in the tree, and grow by the ſap which they receive from it; between the head and the members, which by holding under the head live and grow, having

having a ſupply of nouriſhment adminiſtered to every part. Under theſe beautiful images the ſcripture ſets forth the reality, and the bleſſed fruits of this union. The Holy Spirit makes it known to the believer, by enabling him to rely on God's word, as infallible truth, and to receive Chriſt's perſon as the almighty Saviour, and he ſtrengthens it, by enabling the believer to make uſe of Chriſt's fulneſs, and to live by faith upon him in all his offices, for the partaking of all his promiſed graces and bleſſings.

That faith which is of the operation of God always produces the knowledge and the fruits of this bleſſed union, and enables the ſoul to give itſelf up to Chriſt, that it may be one with him, not in a figurative metaphorical way, but as really and truly, as the building is one with the foundation, as much one in intereſt, as huſband and wife; one in influence, as the root and the branches, the head and the members. So that this is not an empty notion about Chriſt, or ſome clear knowledge of him, or a mere approving of his way of ſalvation, but it is an actual receiving of him into the heart for righteouſneſs to juſtify, and to dwell and reign there to ſanctify; a receiving him as a perfect Saviour, and living upon him and his fulneſs; waiting upon him to be taught daily; truſting wholly for acceptance to his blood and righteouſneſs; reſting, relying, leaning upon his promiſed ſtrength to hold out

unto

unto the end; and hoping for eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The saving faith thus receives Christ, and thus lives upon Christ.

Now, reader, examine and prove thyself, whether thou hast this faith. Dost thou believe with thy heart unto righteousness? Thou canst not live upon Christ, unless thou art first in Christ. Thou must be first persuaded of thine interest in him, before thou canst make use of it, and improve it; and therefore the knowledge of thy union with him must be clear and plain, before thou canst have a free and open communion with him. There must be faith, before there can be the fruits of faith; and strong faith, before there can be much and ripe fruit. Little faith will receive but little from Christ. The weak believer is full of doubts and fears, and when he wants comfort or strength, or any other things which Christ has promised to give his people, he is questioning whether he has any right to expect them; and therefore he does not receive them; because he has not boldness and access with confidence to God by faith in Christ Jesus. From hence appears the necessity of being established in the faith. The believer must have clear evidence of his interest in Christ, before he can live comfortable and happy upon Christ: therefore he must look well to the foundation, and see there be no doubts left about his being settled upon it.

Christ

Chriſt being the ſure foundation, how can he ſafely build thereon all his ſalvation, unleſs he be firſt ſatisfied, that he is upon it? The peace with God in his conſcience, every act of ſpiritual life, and the whole walk and well ordering of his converſation depend upon the ſettling of this point. It ought to be finally determined, and brought to this iſſue: "Chriſt is mine, I "know it from the word of God. I have the "witneſs of the ſpirit of God, and Chriſt allows "me, unworthy as I am, to make uſe of him "and of his fulneſs for the ſupply of all my "needs; and I find I do make uſe of him, and "thereby I know from daily experience, that I "am in him, becauſe I live upon him." According as this point is ſettled, ſo in proportion will be the life of faith. If the believer be thoroughly grounded in it without any doubt or fear, then he may, and will with confidence improve his intereſt in Chriſt; but if he ſtill leave it in ſuſpenſe, his faith can be but little, and therefore he will obtain little comfort or ſtrength from Chriſt.

Reader, art thou one of the weak in faith? Doſt thou feel it? Doſt thou mourn for it? And doſt thou know, from whence thy faith is to be ſtrengthened? Who can increaſe it, but he alone who gives it? O pray then to the Lord God to give thee the ſpirit of wiſdom and revelation, that the eyes of thy underſtanding may be

enlightened

enlightened to ſee the infinite ſufficiency of Chriſt's perſon, as God-man, and the everlaſting merit of his life and death to ſave his people from their ſins. And whatever hinders thee from ſeeing the fulneſs of Chriſt's ſalvation, and reſting comfortably by faith upon it, earneſtly entreat the Lord to remove it. If it be ſin, beg of God to make thee more willing to part with it. If it be guilt, pray him to ordain peace in thy conſcience through the blood of ſprinkling. If it be much corruption, it cannot be ſubdued, until it be firſt pardoned. If thou haſt got under the ſpirit of bondage, look up to the Lord Chriſt for that liberty, wherewith he makes his people free. Whatever it be, as ſoon as it is diſcovered to thee, make uſe of prayer, believing God's word of faithfulneſs; that what thou aſketh thou ſhalt have, and that he will ſo eſtabliſh thee, that thou ſhalt go on from faith to faith. May it be thy happy caſe. *Amen.*

Reader, if thou art an awakened man, convinced of ſin by the word and Spirit of God, all thine enemies will try to keep thee from the clear knowledge of thy union with Chriſt. The reaſon is plain: becauſe then thou wilt not be able to depend upon Chriſt's promiſed ſtrength, and to make uſe of it by faith, which is almighty to defeat them all. Hearken not therefore to any ſuggeſtion, nor be afraid of any oppoſition, which would hinder thee from ſeeking to be fully

fully convinced of thine intereſt in Chriſt, and of thy being a branch in the true vine. Satan will uſe all his wiles and fiery darts; and all carnal profeſſors will be on his ſide, and they will have cloſe allies in thine own breaſt, in thine unbelief, in thy legal ſpirit, and in thy luſts and corruptions. Conſider why do theſe enemies fight ſo hard againſt thy being ſafely ſettled, and comfortably grounded upon Chriſt by living faith? Is it not becauſe thou wilt then be an overmatch for them, through the ſtrength of Jeſus? And does not this plainly ſhew thee the abſolute neceſſity of knowing, that Chriſt and thou are one? Till this be known, thou wilt be afraid to apply to him and to make uſe of his ſtrength, and till thou doſt uſe it, all thine enemies will triumph over thee. O beg of God then to increaſe thy faith, that thou mayeſt be fully convinced of thy union with Chriſt, and mayeſt live in him ſafe, and on him happy. Hear and read his word, and pray for the effectual working of the Lord the Spirit in it, and by it, that faith may come and grow by hearing, until it be finally ſettled without doubt or wavering, that Chriſt is thine, and thou art his.

After the believer is thus grounded and eſtabliſhed in the knowledge of his union with Chriſt, it behoves him then to enquire, what God has given him a right to in conſequence of this union; and the ſcripture will inform him, that

that in the covenant of Grace it has pleaſed the Father, that all fulneſs ſhould dwell in his Son, as the head for the uſe of his members. He has it to ſupply all their need. They cannot poſſibly want any thing, but it is treaſured up for them in his infinite fulneſs; there they may have it, grace for grace, every moment, as their occaſions require, and they have it in no other way, and by no other hand, than faith, truſting the word of promiſe, and relying upon Chriſt's faithfulneſs and power to fulfill it; as it is written, "the "juſt ſhall live by his faith," *Hab.* ii. 3. having received juſtification to life by faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, he depends on Chriſt to keep him alive, and makes uſe of Chriſt's fulneſs for all the wants of that ſpiritual life, which he has given. He truſts him for them all, and lives upon him by faith for the continual receiving of them all, and according to his faith ſo is it done unto him.

Let this be well weighed and conſidered, that the juſtified perſon lives and performs every act of ſpiritual life by faith. This is a very important leſſon, and therefore it is taught in ſcripture as plainly as words can ſpeak. Every thing is promiſed to, and is received by faith. Thus it is ſaid, Ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and if children then heirs according to the promiſe, heirs of God and joint heirs with Chriſt, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, righteouſ-

righteouſneſs, and holineſs, made for their uſe wiſdom to teach them, righteouſneſs to juſtify them, and holineſs to ſanctify them, yea, he has all things in his fulneſs for their uſe, as the free grant ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* iii. 21, *&c.* "All things are "yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, "or the world, or life, or death, or things pre- "ſent, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are "Chriſt's, and Chriſt's is God's." Conſider, believer, what a large eſtate this is: thy title to it is good, and thou entereſt into poſſeſſion by faith. See then that thou make uſe of thine inheritance, and live upon it. Do not ſay, when thou wanteſt any thing, I know not where to get it: for whatever the God-man has of wiſdom, righteouſneſs, holineſs, power and glory, he has it, as the head of the body for thee as one of his members, for thy uſe and benefit, and he has promiſed it to thee in his word. Make free with him then. Go to him with confidence. Thou canſt not do him greater honour than to receive from him what he has to give. That is glorifying him. It is putting the crown upon his head, and confeſſing him to be a perfect all-ſufficient Chriſt when it pleaſeth thee, as it did his Father, that in him ſhould all fulneſs dwell, and when thou art content to live out of thyſelf upon his fulneſs for the ſupply of all thy needs in time and in eternity. To live thus upon him is his glory, and it is thy privilege, thy intereſt, and thy happineſs.

pineſs. In every ſtate, ſpiritual and temporal, and in every circumſtance, thou canſt poſſibly be in, thou art commanded to look up to Chriſt, that thou mayeſt receive out of his fulneſs, and to depend upon him to ſave thee from every evil, and to beſtow upon thee every good. In thy walk heavenwards, and in every thing thou meeteſt with by the way, put thy truſt in Chriſt, and expect from him the fulfilling of all his promiſes. He has all power in heaven and earth for that very purpoſe. Still rely upon him, and caſt thy burdens on him, when thou art tempted, when old corruptions ariſe, when the world and the devil aſſault thee, when under a ſenſe of weakneſs and dulneſs in duty, when in darkneſs and deſertion, in perſecution and trouble, in pain and poverty, in ſickneſs and death. This is the life of faith. Thou wilt live like a chriſtian indeed, if, being in any of theſe caſes, thou believeſt that Chriſt is able, becauſe he is almighty, and willing, becauſe he has promiſed, to ſupply thy wants, and then canſt truſt in him for that ſupply. Depend upon it, thou ſhalt have it, and it ſhall be done unto thee according to his word.

After the believer is become one with Chriſt, and through him has a right to all the riches of grace, and may by faith make uſe of them as his own, why is he ſo long in learning this leſſon perfectly? Being adopted into the heavenly family,

family, and an heir of the heavenly inheritance, why does not he immediately live up to his privilege, and to his eſtate? His title is good. The inheritance is ſure. All things are become his: for all fulneſs is in Chriſt, and by virtue of his union with Chriſt, this fulneſs is his, and he may by faith be always receiving out of it every grace and bleſſing, which Chriſt has promiſed: why then does not he at once attain to this happy life of faith? Sad experience proves that young believers do not. They meet with ſo many difficulties, that they grow up ſlowly into Chriſt in all things. They do not attain to a ſolid eſtabliſhment in the faith in a day. Enemies without and within ſtop their progreſs, inſomuch that they often continue little children for a long time. They have the ſame right to Chriſt, the ſame privileges, and the ſame promiſed grace, which young men and fathers in Chriſt have, but they have not learned by experience how to improve their intereſt in him, and to make the moſt of it. The difficulties and temptations which weaken their hold of Chriſt, and ſtop their growth in him are many; ſome of the chief are theſe:

1. They continue little children and weak in faith, becauſe they do not preſently attain a ſolid acquaintance with the perſon of Chriſt, and are not thoroughly ſatisfied, how able he was and ſufficient for every thing he undertook, and how perfectly he has finiſhed every part of his work.

2. This

2. This keeps them ignorant of many things in which the glory of his salvation consists; hence they have not clear believing views of its fulness, and of its freeness.

3. By which means they labour under many doubts about the manner of their receiving this salvation. A legal spirit working with their unbelief puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith; and,

4. These legal unbelieving reasonings gain great power from their unskilfulness in their warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit; and,

5. All these difficulties are mightily strengthened from their hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports more than to the word of God. While believers are under these difficulties, their faith meets with many checks in its growth, and until they be enabled to overcome them, they continue to be little children in Christ. Their weak faith receives but little from Christ, and it continues weak, because they have but little dependence upon the effectual working of Christ's mighty power. The exceeding greatness of his power is able to strengthen them, and he has promised it, but they dare not trust him. Consider therefore, reader, if thou art one of these babes, why thou dost not grow up faster into Christ.

The firſt thing that ſtops thee is the ignorance which is in thy mind about his perſon, and the prejudice againſt him, which is in thy carnal heart. Theſe are in all men by nature; and theſe ſatan will work upon in order to hinder the increaſe of thy faith. He will uſe all his cunning, and his power to keep thee from growing in that knowledge of Chriſt, which is eternal life. He will inject into thy heart blaſphemous thoughts againſt his Godhead, and when thou art reading in ſcripture, or hearing about his being God manifeſt in the fleſh, he will try to puzzle and perplex thy imagination with a How can theſe things be? He will repreſent the union of the two natures in Chriſt as a thing not to be underſtood, and as if they, who believed it with the cleareſt evidence of God's word and Spirit, had only ſome fancy about it. He has an old grudge againſt Chriſt, and will not ſcruple to tell any lies of him. He was a liar from the beginning, and abode not in the truth. Regard him not. Mind what the word of truth ſays, and pray thou mayeſt underſtand it: for the more thou knoweſt of the Lord Chriſt, that bleſſed God-man, the more wilt thou be ſettled, and eſtabliſhed in him. It is written of him, firſt, that he is God, true and very God, in the holy bleſſed and glorious Trinity a perſon coequal, and coeternal with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, *Iſa.* ix. 6. Unto us a child is born, who is the mighty God; ſecondly, that

that he is Jehovah, which ſignifies the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, *Iſa.* xliii. 11. I, even I am Jehovah, and beſide me there is no Saviour; from whence it is evident, that the Saviour is Jehovah, and that he exiſts in a manner independent of, and diſtinct from, all other beings and things. St. *Jude* makes the oppoſition to this fundamental truth the condemning ſin of certain heretics, who denied Jeſus Chriſt to be the only Lord God, and our Lord. In the covenant of grace this divine Perſon undertook to be made man. He who was true and very God was made true and very man; he had a reaſonable ſoul and human fleſh, and was in all points like other men, ſin excepted. And as the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man, ſo God and man is one Chriſt. This is the glorious Perſon, who undertook in the covenant of grace to be man's ſurety. St. *Paul* calls him the ſurety of the New Teſtament; and what could there be wanting in him for this high office? He is every way qualified to be the ſurety for man, who is himſelf true and very man, who is alſo God as well as man, and therefore has all the perfections of Jehovah to render what he did and ſuffered as man's ſurety infinitely and everlaſtingly meritorious.

This is the bleſſed object of faith, God and man united in one Chriſt. Conſider then, reader, what the ſcripture ſays of his wonderful perſon, in order that thy faith in him may be eſtabliſhed.

That very ſelf-exiſtent God, who ſpake and all things were made, who commanded and they ſtand faſt to this very hour, was made fleſh. He came to be the ſurety for his people, to obey and ſuffer in their ſtead. What could not his almighty power effect? Is any thing too hard for the Lord God? What obedience can his Father's law demand, which he is not infinitely able to pay? What ſufferings can ſatisfy his Father's juſtice, which he is not abſolutely qualified to endure? for he has every perfection and attribute equal with the Father. On this truth thou muſt reſt; and is it not a ſure foundation? In the certainty of it thou muſt ſeek to be more grounded every day: becauſe as thou groweſt in the knowledge of his divine perſon, thou wilt become more ſatisfied of his infinite ſufficiency to ſave; and fully convinced of this, thou wilt be enabled from ſcripture to anſwer and ſilence thine own unbelieving thoughts, and to reject the blaſphemous ſuggeſtions of ſatan againſt the Lord Chriſt. Obſerve then that he is God, and that he is Jehovah. Read and meditate on what the ſcripture ſays of his Godhead, and pray that thou mayeſt be taught of God to underſtand it: for no man can ſay that Jeſus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt. It is his office to glorify Jeſus, by enabling thee to believe him to be Lord and God, and to call him thy Lord and thy God, and to prove he is ſo, by thy humble dependence

ence upon him for every bleſſing both in time and in eternity.

It is much to be lamented, that believers in general take ſo little pains to get a clear knowledge of the doctrine of the ever-bleſſed Trinity: for want of which their faith is unſettled, and they are liable to many errors both in judgement and practice. I would therefore moſt earneſtly recommend it to all that are weak in faith, to be diligent in hearing and reading what in ſcripture is revealed concerning the Trinity in unity, looking up always for the inward teaching of the Holy Spirit, and I would direct them to a form of ſound words in the common prayer book for *Trinity Sunday*, which contains the ſhorteſt and beſt account of the ſubject that I ever ſaw. "It "is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, "that we ſhould at all times, and in all places, "give thanks unto thee, O Lord, almighty, "everlaſting God. Who art one God, one "Lord, not one only perſon, but three perſons "in one ſubſtance: for that which we believe "of the glory of the Father, the ſame we believe "of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, without "any difference or inequality." Theſe are precious words. Meditate, reader, upon them, and intreat the Holy Spirit to enlighten thine underſtanding with the ſaving knowledge of them; that being eſtabliſhed in the doctrine of the ever bleſſed Trinity, and of the Godhead of the Lord Chriſt,

Chriſt, thou mayeſt be enabled to overcome the difficulties which aroſe,

Secondly, From thy not being well acquainted with the nature of Chriſt's ſalvation. Concerning which young believers are apt to have many doubts. Carnal reaſon is ſtrong in them. The ſpirit of bondage reſiſts with many and mighty arguments, and unbelief muſters up all its forces, and there is a long and obſtinate fight againſt being ſaved freely and fully by the grace of Chriſt Jeſus. But the arguments, which God has provided in his word, when applied by his Spirit, will prevail and overcome. Meditate upon them for the eſtabliſhing of thy weak faith. Conſider, firſt, the covenant. Salvation is not a thing of chance, or left to man's will or power, but it was contrived by the bleſſed Trinity in the covenant of grace, and every thing belonging to it was perfectly ſettled. It is ſaid to be 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 5. an everlaſting covenant ordered in all things and ſure. O thou of little faith, why then doſt thou doubt? What! doubt of God's love? Here's a covenant ſpringing from his mere love, and from everlaſting. Doubt of its being well contrived? Infinite wiſdom orders it in all things. Doubt of its being well executed? It is in all things ſure, ſure as God's almighty power and faithfulneſs can make it. What motives are here for the ſtrengthening of thy faith? May the Lord render them effectual.

Reflect,

Reflect, Secondly, upon the undertakings of the Lord Chriſt, the ſurety of this covenant. There was nothing left out of this covenant; it was ordered in all things belonging to ſalvation, and Chriſt nndertook to perform all things on the part of his Father, that his law might be magnified, and his juſtice made honourable and glorious; and on the part of the ſinner, that he might be ſaved from all evil, and entitled to all good. And being God and man united in one Chriſt he was a proper ſurety to reconcile God to man, and to reconcile man to God. May theſe things then ſink deep into thy heart, that thy ſurety has undertaken the whole of thy ſalvation, to do all for thee, and all in thee, and all by thee. What canſt thou deſire more for the ſettling of thy faith?

5. Perhaps thou wilt ſay, his undertakings were great, but has he fulfilled them? Yes, and ſo perfectly, that he is able to ſave to the uttermoſt. He was called Jeſus, becauſe he was to ſave his people from their ſins; as their ſurety he was to fulfil the law for them by his obedience, and to ſuffer the pains and penalties of it by his death and paſſion. Accordingly in the fulneſs of time he was manifeſt in the fleſh, and came to do the will of his Father: of his obedience to that will he thus ſpeaks. "I have finiſhed the "work, which thou gaveſt me to do." Of his ſuffering that will he ſaid with his laſt breath,

"It

" It is finiſhed." Obſerve, whatever he undertook to do in his life and death was finiſhed, and it was demonſtrated that as man's ſurety he had done and ſuffered every thing ordered in the covenant, by his reſurrection from the dead: for then did the Father declare him to be the Son of God with power. Will not all this ſatisfy thee, O thou of little faith? Here is one more cauſe of thy doubting removed; thou canſt not deny but Chriſt has finiſhed every thing he undertook, and in conſequence thereof he has all power in heaven and earth to beſtow a full and finiſhed ſalvation. What canſt thou now object?

4. Does a thought ariſe in thy heart? It is finiſhed, but is it ſo freely given that ſuch an unworthy creature, as I am, may partake of it? Yes: it comes to thee in the way of a free gift. Great, ineſtimable, and eternal, as it is, yet it is all thine in receiving. Not he who wortheth, but he who believeth is juſtified from all things. It is by faith that believers are juſtified and ſanctified, are ſtrengthened and comforted in their walk, by faith they fight againſt all their enemies, and by faith they conquer, and lay hold of eternal life. And therefore it is all of faith, that it might be by grace. Salvation is wrought out and finiſhed by thy Surety, given to thee freely, continued with all its bleſſings in time and thro' eternity; as a free gift, to the praiſe of the glory of free grace. Why therefore art thou diſcouraged?

raged? Haſt thou nothing to buy with? Then obey the Lord's command, Come and buy free ſalvation without money, and without price. How ſhould this motive ſtill add to the eſtabliſhment of thy faith? For there thou ſeeſt whatever thou wanteſt is thine by believing. Thou mayeſt have it freely by grace. It is treaſured up for thee in the fulneſs of thy dear Saviour, and thou canſt not honour him more, than to make free uſe of it. What doſt thou ſay to this? Haſt thou any thing to object? Canſt thou find any fault with the covenant of grace, or with the undertakings of the God-man in it? No, certainly, the covenant was well ordered in all things and ſure, and what the Surety of the covenant undertook he has perfectly fulfilled. Salvation is finiſhed on his part. He has glorified the law by his infinitely perfect obedience, he has made divine juſtice honourable by his ſufferings and death, he has brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs for his people, and will bring them to everlaſting glory: for he has already taken poſſeſſion of it for them as the head of the body the church, and he has all power in heaven and earth to ſave them day by day, until he make them partakers of his eternal ſalvation. What can thy heart wiſh for more than ſuch a Saviour, and ſuch a ſalvation? O! be not faithleſs then, but believing, and if thou has any doubts left, endeavour to have them cleared up by reading and

and prayer, until thy faith be perfectly ſettled on the divinity of God thy Saviour, and the infinite ſufficiency of his ſalvation. Theſe two points lay at the very foundation of the chriſtian religion. They muſt be ſuppoſed in all its principles, and built upon in all its practice; therefore being of univerſal influence; if they be thoroughly eſtabliſhed thy faith will be ſtedfaſt, and thy life well ordered and comfortable. Examine then, and prove thyſelf here before thou readeſt any farther. Doſt thou believe Chriſt to be true and very God, in every perfection and attribute equal with the Father? And is his a full and a free ſalvation? All the following directions depend upon, and can only profit thee, ſo far as thou believeſt theſe two points. Look well then to thy eſtabliſhment in them. If it be ſtrong, the life of faith will be ſteady and proſperous; but if it be weak, thou wilt be liable to be toſt about continually with errors, and overcome with temptations, eſpecially with thoſe, to which a legal ſpirit will expoſe thee, as I purpoſed to ſhew under the

Third general head, in which is to be conſidered, how the little children in Chriſt for want of being eſtabliſhed in the belief of his Godhead, and of his full and free ſalvation, labour under many doubts, a legal ſpirit working with their unbelief puts them upon reaſoning continually againſt being ſaved freely by grace thro' faith.

He is of a legal ſpirit, who is under the law, and apprehends himſelf bound to keep it, as the condition of life, requiring of him, Do this and thou ſhalt live. In his underſtanding he ſees this, and no other way to life, in his will he is continually inclined to it, and in his heart he loves it; becauſe he fancies it in his own power to attain life in this way, and he can merit it by his own works, which mightily gratifies his ſelf-love, and indulges his pride. This legal ſpirit reigns over all men in their natural ſtate, but does not diſcover its tyranny, until it be oppoſed; and then ſo ſoon as the ſoul is quickened from a death in treſpaſſes and ſins, it begins to fight, trying to keep the poor ſinner in bondage by its legal workings and ſtrivings, and putting him upon ſeeking for ſome good diſpoſition or qualification in himſelf, on account of which God ſhould love him. Thus the awakened ſoul, under the ſpirit of bondage, always ſeeks deliverance by the works of that law, which can do nothing more than bring him to the knowledge of ſin, diſcover to him the exceeding ſinfulneſs of it, and the exceeding great puniſhment which it deſerves; by which means it is always nouriſhing the doubts and fears of unbelief. And after the Lord has in a meaſure removed them by a clear diſcovery of the ſalvation that is in Jeſus, and by the gift of faith, yet ſtill this legal ſpirit will be trying to bring the ſoul into bond-

age

age again to fear, and it too often prevails. Young believers find it the worſt enemy they have to deal with. It is a ſly, ſubtle foe, that ſeems to intend them a kindneſs, while it is always on the ſide of their greateſt enemy. It would appear to them to be actuated by a zeal for God, but it is to eclipſe the glory of the Lord Chriſt, to take away the all-ſufficiency of his ſalvation, and to rob them of their great joy and peace in believing.

If any one ſhould aſk, how this legal ſpirit comes to have ſuch power over mankind? The ſcripture informs us,

Firſt, that all men being God's creatures, are under the law to him, bound to keep it, or bound if they tranſgreſs to ſuffer the threatened pains and penalties. In this ſtate man was created, and in it all men are by nature, and therefore there is in us all a continual leaning to the law, and a deſire to attain righteouſneſs by the works of it. We are all wedded to this way of gaining God's favour. The apoſtle ſays, there is a marriage union between us and the law, and it, like an huſband, has dominion over us as long as it liveth; ſo that we cannot be married to Chriſt, until that be dead wherein we were held. You may ſee this in the Jews. How does Moſes labour to bring them off from an opinion of their own righteouſneſs? And a greater than Moſes has done the ſame in his diſcourſes againſt the

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ſcribes and phariſees: yea, the apoſtles of our Lord were forced to write and preach againſt this leaning to the law, it gave ſuch diſturbance to the true diſciples of Chriſt. And notwithſtanding the ſcripture arguments againſt it, yet we have great numbers among us, who ſeek for a juſtifying righteouſneſs by the works of the law. And they are put upon ſeeking this,

Secondly, from their ignorance of the law. They are not acquainted with its nature; for it demands what they cannot pay. It inſiſts upon an obedience, ſpiritual, perfect and uninterrupted: for the leaſt offence, if but in thought, it comes with its fearful ſentence, *Curſed is every one, who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them.* On him who does not continue in all things, and not one man ever did, this ſentence takes place, and if he was to live a thouſand years he could not do any thing to repeal it. The law will always be to him the miniſtration of condemnation, and the miniſtration of death, and that is all it can do for him. It provides no remedy, and gives him no hope, but leaves him condemned to the firſt and to the ſecond death; and yet ſuch is the blindneſs of the ſinner, that he will be ſtill leaning to the law, and afraid to truſt wholly to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and this ariſes,

Thirdly, From his ignorance of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is infinitely perfect, and wants

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no works of the law to be joined with it in the juſtifying of a ſinner: becauſe it is the righteouſneſs of God, wrought out by the God-man for his people, and it is the righteouſneſs of faith, they receive it by faith without works; ſo that it is directly oppoſite to the righteouſneſs of a legal ſpirit. Hence we have many among us, great profeſſors too, who are ignorant of God's righteouſneſs; they have not been entirely brought off from a legal bottom, and therefore they talk of being juſtified without a juſtifying righteouſneſs, which if God was to do, he would be unrighteous, and which as he has declared he will not do, their fancied juſtification leaves them ſtill in their ſins. They dare not put their whole truſt and confidence in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed unto ſinners, and made theirs by faith. They have many fears about imputed righteouſneſs, altho' the apoſtle has not ſcrupled to mention it eleven times in one chapter, *Rom.* iv. and theſe fears make them read the ſcripture with ſuch prejudice that they ſay they cannot find the expreſſion, *faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt* in all the Bible. They may find the ſenſe of the expreſſion in Moſes and in all the prophets, and the very words in 2 *Pet.* i. 1. Simon Peter a ſervant and an apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt to them who have obtained like precious faith with us in, the Greek is ἐν, in the righteouſneſs of God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Here

Here is faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, with ſeveral glorious titles to recommend it, namely, it is the righteouſneſs of God, of God our Saviour, of Jeſus Chriſt. From whence can men's oppoſition to this way of juſtification ariſe, but from their not being convinced by the Spirit of God of the neceſſity of Chriſt's righteouſneſs? It is his peculiar office to convince of this truth. No teaching but his can do it. O that he may do it in the hearts of thoſe, who out of a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge, eclipſe the glory of the Lord, and rob afflicted conſciences of their comfort by oppoſing imputed righteouſneſs! It is a righteouſneſs of ſo high and heavenly a nature, wrought out by another, and ſo wonderful a Perſon, is beſtowed as a free gift upon the chief of ſinners, whereby alone they obtain remiſſion of their ſins, and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven, and they receive it by faith only without works, which a legal ſpirit always wants to mix with it, that no one could ever believe in it, unleſs it were given him from above. May it be given to thoſe profeſſors who cannot yet ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt to ſee their want of it, and with the heart to believe in it unto ſalvation.

Reader, haſt thou not found what an enemy this legal ſpirit is to thy peace and joy, and how it is always inclining thee to ſome ſelf-righteouſneſs,

neſs, thro' thy ignorance of the righteouſneſs of the law, and of the righteouſneſs of faith? And wouldſt thou gladly be delivered from it? Know then that nothing can ſubdue it, but the bringing into thy conſcience a better hope from a better righteouſneſs, than that of the law, and when thou art enabled to plead it there againſt all the charges of ſin and ſatan, then thou wilt ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made thee free. His is a better righteouſneſs, it is infinitely perfect and everlaſting, even the righteouſneſs of God; by faith in this righteouſneſs thou ſhalt be ſaved from the law, and ſhalt receive remiſſion of ſins, through it the Father doth accept thee and give thee the Spirit of his Son to lead and comfort and ſanctify thee, he doth love thee and bleſs thee, as his dear child, making all things work together under him for thy good, and keeping thee by his mighty power thro' faith unto ſalvation: ſo that in and on account of this righteouſneſs thou ſhalt be ſaved from all the evils of ſin, and receive all ſpiritual bleſſings in earth and heaven. And this thou ſhalt have freely, without any merit, or work of the law: for this righteouſneſs comes wholly by grace, and is for thee a ſinner, as ſuch, and is to juſtify thee from the condemnation of the law, to turn its curſes into bleſſings, and its threatened puniſhments into happineſs. And this it can do for thee perfectly and everlaſtingly, ſo that

being found in this righteouſneſs, there is no grace promiſed in time, or glory in eternity, but it ſhall be thine. The Lord God promiſes them to thee in the fulleſt and freeſt manner, to thee, without any exception or limitation, being a ſinner, and ungodly, though one of the vileſt and baſeſt, yet to thee, as ſuch, is the word of this ſalvation ſent. And it will be all thine in the comfortable enjoyment of it, thro' believing. Thou art to bring nothing to recommend thee, but that thou art a ſenſible ſinner, and thy right and title to a finiſhed ſalvation is clear from the warrant of God's word, when thou believeſt with thy heart in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. The divine command is, *believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* the promiſe is, whoſoever believeth in him, ſhall not periſh, ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins, ſhall be juſtified from all things, ſhall have everlaſting life. Why then doſt thou lean to works, ſince ſalvation is by faith? Why doſt thou diſquiet thyſelf about attaining the righteouſneſs of the law, and thereby ſuffer the law to diſturb the peace of thy conſcience, ſince thou haſt a far better righteouſneſs, which ought to reign there, even the righteouſneſs which is of God by faith? For thou art a believer, and although a weak one, yet thou haſt as good a title to Chriſt and his righteouſneſs as the ſtrongeſt believer in the world: becauſe thy right comes from the free grant of the word of grace, and is apprehended

by faith, by which all things are become thine. Thou art an heir of them all by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. O, thou of little faith, why then doſt thou doubt? Remember, how highly thou diſhonoureſt the infinite love and free ſalvation of Jeſus, and how much thou robbeſt thy own ſoul of its peace, and of its growth in grace, by thy weak and little faith. Think upon theſe things, and intreat the Author and Finiſher of the faith to ſtrengthen it in thy ſoul.

But perhaps thou wilt ſay, How ſhall I ſo live upon Chriſt with my weak faith that it may grow ſtronger, and I may get the better of my legal ſpirit? Here is the remedy; may it be to thee effectual! The ſcripture directs thee to look at Chriſt God-man as thy ſurety, who for thee has wrought out a finiſhed ſalvation, and whatever he has promiſed in his word relating to this ſalvation, thou art to truſt him for the making of it good, and to depend upon his faithfulneſs and power to make it good to thee. Whatever therefore he has done and ſuffered to ſave thee from the curſe of the law, and from the ſpirit of bondage, and to make thee free with the liberty of the children of God, thou art to live upon him for theſe bleſſings, and by faith to be always receiving them from him in the fulleſt and largeſt meaſure, that he promiſes them to thee. Look not into thyſelf then for any qualification, but look unto Jeſus; that thou mayeſt experience more of

that liberty wherewith he hath made thee free, and mayeſt be no longer a babe unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs. Hear what he ſays, If the Son ſhall make you free ye ſhall be free indeed, free from the law of ſin and death, free from condemnation at the bar of God, and being freed from the bondage of corruption ye ſhall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt. This is the freedom which God promiſes thee: it is very extenſive, has many noble privileges, and vaſt bleſſings. By faith all is thine. See how perfectly believers have received all, and may thy faith be like theirs. *Rom.* viii. 15. *&c.* "Ye have not received the "ſpirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have "received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we "pray, Abba, Father. The Spirit itſelf bear-"eth witneſs to our ſpirits, that we are the "children of God, and if children then heirs, "heirs of God and joint heirs with Chriſt." Obſerve what is here ſaid of the believing Romans, and by faith thou ſhalt experience the ſame, as perfectly as they did.

1. They were freed from the ſpirit of bondage, under which they once had laboured:

2. They were ſo freed as to be under it no more; they were not to fear again, as heretofore: for

3. They had received the Spirit of adoption, and he gave them the evidence of their ſonſhip. Upon which,

4. They believed God was their reconciled Father, and they had boldneſs and acceſs to him with confidence. And therefore,

5. They lived in light and walked in love, like his children and heirs, who were to abide in his houſe for ever.

See alſo what great freedom the Galatians had, chap. iv. 4, *&c.* "God ſent forth his Son made of a "woman, made under the law, to redeem them "that were under the law, that we might receive "the adoption of ſons. And becauſe ye are "ſons God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son "into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father: where-"fore thou art no more a ſervant, but a ſon, "and if a ſon, then an heir of God thro' Chriſt." O what treaſures of grace and conſolation are there in this ſcripture, tending to ſubdue thy legal ſpirit. Conſider ſome of them.

1 All men having broken the law, and being under the curſe of it, Chriſt was made under the law, that the law might reach him as the ſurety of his people, accordingly,

2. By his obedience to the precepts, and by his ſuffering the penalties of the law, he redeemed his people, who were under the law; ſo that,

3. They

3. They are no longer in bondage to it, but being made free, and having received the adoption of ſons,

4. They have the ſpirit of liberty ſent into their hearts to witneſs to them, that Chriſt fulfilled the law for them; and,

5. That the Father loves them, as his dear children, and they love him and ſerve him without fear, crying to him, Abba, Father;

6. Wherefore they are no longer ſervants in bondage to any one, but are made free indeed, being now the ſons of God through faith in Chriſt Jeſus. And,

7. If ſons, then heirs of God, and free to inherit whatever he has promiſed to give his children in earth and heaven.

Theſe and many more arguments are contained in this one ſcripture, tending to ſubdue thy legal ſpirit, and to bring thee to live more comfortably by faith upon Chriſt, who, as thy ſurety, has fully kept the law for thee in his life and death. Thou art to conſider thyſelf now, not under the law, but under grace, and therefore abſolutely free from the condemning power of the law. This thou muſt maintain againſt all the carnal reaſonings of thy legal ſpirit, *Chriſt is my law fulfiller*. And thou wilt glorify him for redeeming thee from under the law, and wilt live in ſweet peace in thine own conſcience, while thou keepeſt faſt hold of this moſt bleſſed

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and eternally precious truth. May all thy reading and prayer, and the uſe of all means help thee to grow in the knowledge and experience of it.

There is a very ſtrong bias and leaning in weak believers to a legal ſpirit, which ought to make them read ſuch promiſes as I have been mentioning over and over again, that God may thereby encourage them to maintain the liberty which he hath given them in Chriſt Jeſus, and to ſtand faſt in it againſt the freſh attacks of the devil and unbelief. They ſhould be always jeaous over themſelves, and watchful againſt their enemies: becauſe, after they have in a truly goſpel and evangelical way through grace got their legal ſpirit ſubdued, yet if it be not in the ſame way kept ſubdued, it will break out with more power than ever, and will be likely to bring them into bondage again to fear. And this may, and I have known it often happen; after they had obtained ſome great victories over it, and finding it not ſtir for ſome time, they flattered themſelves they ſhould have but little trouble with it any more. Thus they were drawn off their guard, which gave room to their legal ſpirit to exert itſelf again with vigour. This ſurpriſed the weak believers, put them upon reaſoning and doubting, whether all had been right with them before; and ſo at the very time when they ſhould have taken the ſhield of faith, and

ſhould

ſhould have been making uſe of it, they were queſtioning whether they had any, which left them unarmed in the midſt of their enemies, an eaſy prey to every temptation; but an inviſible power kept them ſafe, although they were not comfortable in themſelves.

For the encouragement of perſons in this caſe, that they may preſently recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the devil, they ſhould obſerve,

1. What the ſcripture ſays of a legal ſpirit, deſcribing it to be one of the members of their corrupt nature, one of the affections of the fleſh, which will never be quite dead, while the breath is in their bodies. It is an enemy that will be always fighting againſt the Holy Spirit: for they are directly contrary the one to the other, and therefore believers muſt not dream of any ſuch victory as leaves no more fighting, but muſt expect ſharp battles with their legal ſpirit as long as ever they live. And,

Secondly, The ſame means, by which they formerly obtained victory muſt be made uſe of again. As often as the legal ſpirit is tempting, Chriſt's ſtrength muſt be oppoſed to it, and his ſtrength muſt be brought into the ſoul by faith in his righteouſneſs, as it is written, *Iſa.* xlii. 24. "Surely ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righte-"ouſneſs and ſtrength." Righteouneſs comes firſt and is eſtabliſhed in the conſcience, that it may be pleaded and maintained there againſt all

all the charges and accuſations of the law. And as often as theſe ariſe afreſh, ſtill they muſt be anſwered and ſilenced with this plea—In the Lord Chriſt have I righteouſneſs, he is my lawfulfiller, and I depend upon his promiſed ſtrength to make me ſtand faſt in that liberty wherewith he hath made me free. And the ſoul muſt not only thus quiet and ſtay itſelf by faith upon the righteouſneſs and ſtrength of Chriſt for victory over the preſent temptation, but muſt alſo,

Thirdly, continually do this: becauſe there is in our nature a continual oppoſition to it. The experience of which is the believer's ſafety. The abiding ſenſe of his being naturally inclined to lean to legal dependences, and therefore his want of Chriſt every moment to juſtify him by his righteouſneſs, and to keep him by his ſtrength, will be the ſureſt way to prevent his falling into bondage: for this will keep him very jealous over himſelf, and will ſhew him the neceſſity of living out of himſelf for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, and while he liveth upon Chriſt for theſe by faith he ſhall not be overcome by any enemy.

The glory of the incarnate God, and his infinite ſufficiency to ſave, have not a greater enemy than a legal ſpirit, and therefore I have enlarged upon this point, that believers might be convinced from the word of God they were ſaved from the condemnation of the law. They will never

never live comfortably till they ſee the law dead and buried, and then willingly give up themſelves to be eſpouſed to Chriſt, who will make them free indeed. And when they have learned of him to enjoy and walk in their chriſtian liberty, then they will be better acquainted with the warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the fleſh and the ſpirit, which warfare is the

Fourth great hindrance, that ſtops the growth of faith in weak believers. They are unſkilful in it, ſoon tired of it, and often likely to be defeated. They do not enter into the battle ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of his might, nor are they certain if they fall in battle, they ſhall be ſaved with an eternal ſalvation. Theſe are great diſcouragements, and until theſe be removed, they cannot fight the good fight of faith, like good ſoldiers of Chriſt Jeſus.

The caſe is thus. There is in every believer an old man, and a new man, nature and grace, fleſh and ſpirit, and theſe are oppoſite and contrary the one to the other in their principles and actions: they are always deſiring different things, and purſuing different ends, which occaſions a continual war between them. The fleſh luſteth always againſt the ſpirit, and has many and mighty allies on its ſide, armies of luſts, the faculties of ſoul and body to bring forth ſin, hoſts of fallen angels, and all the world that layeth in wickedneſs.

wickedneſs. But the new man renewed in the ſpirit of his mind has a reconciled God on his ſide, and therefore he need not fear what any enemy can do unto him, but may bravely face the ſtouteſt of them, even death itſelf, relying upon that ſure word of promiſe, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee.* Here is the believer's encouragement to fight, his God will never leave him. Here he obtains victory every day, his God never forſakes him: and after he has fought the good fight of faith, his God and Saviour will make him more than conqueror: he will ſend death to kill ſin. And then the believer will never more have temptation from it, nor ſorrow about it. But till that happy time come he muſt be fighting againſt his corrupt nature and all its allies. No peace can be made with them, not even a truce. He muſt expect no kind of favour from them: becauſe they are God's irreconcileable enemies, and therefore as long as he is in the world, he muſt be fighting againſt the world, as long as he has a body of fleſh, he muſt oppoſe it with it's affections and luſts, becauſe they war againſt the ſoul, and as long as he is in the reach of temptation he muſt oppoſe the tempter, ſtedfaſt in the faith, never putting off his armour, until the Lord give him a diſcharge.

The believer's peace within, and victory without, are cloſely connected with the clear underſtanding of this caſe, and altho' I have ſtated it from

from the word of God, and agreeably to the ſenſe in which the church of God has always interpreted it, yet for its more full confirmation ſome teſtimonies muſt be brought, which ſpeak to the very point; firſt, to the believer's having in him an old man and a new; ſecondly, that theſe two are at war; and thirdly, that they fight together till death.

Firſt, The apoſtle ſays to the ſaints at Epheſus, chap. iv. 22, &c. "put off the old man, put on "the new." Mind, the ſame perſons had both in them an old man, corrupt according to his deceitful luſts, daily to be put off, and a new man to be put on, and renewed day by day in the ſpirit of his mind. The old man is deſcribed to have a body of ſin with all his members, his affections and luſts; theſe muſt not be obeyed, but mortified. "Let not ſin reign in your mor-"tal body that ye ſhould obey it in the luſts "thereof, neither yield ye your members as in-"ſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin," *Rom.* vi. 12, 13. The ſaints at Rome had ſin in them, and it wanted to reign as it had done heretofore in the luſts thereof, but,

Secondly, They were not to obey them. There was in them a new man, who was to fight againſt thoſe fleſhly luſts which war againſt the ſoul. "The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and "the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe are con-"trary the one to the other, ſo that ye cannot

"do

" do the things that ye would." *Gal.* v. 17. Here is battle between two, the fleſh the whole nature of the old man, and the ſpirit of the new man born again of the ſpirit; the cauſe of it is, the one wills what the other hates, each wants to carry his own will into execution, and theſe being contrary the one to the other, they fight for maſtery; in the battle, the fleſh, the old man is defeated, and the ſpirit working in the new man conquers, and this luſting and fighting is in one and the ſame perſon, in him who is ſaid to be not under the law, to be led by the ſpirit, and to live and to walk in the ſpirit. In *Rom.* viii. 7. the apoſtle calls the fleſh the carnal mind, and he ſays, " It is enmity againſt God: for it is " not ſubject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;" ſince it is enmity itſelf there is no reconciling it, it will not, nay it cannot obey God, but is ever luſting and rebelling againſt his law. The nature of the battle is deſcribed at length in *Rom.* vii. The chapter conſiſts of three parts, firſt, the believer's liberty from the law to ver. 6. ſecondly, he anſwers ſome objections made againſt the law from its nature and properties, and that in his own perſon, becauſe it had been the means of bringing him to the right knowledge of ſin, ver. 7. and ſin being diſcovered by the law thro' the corruption of nature, raged and rebelled the more in him, ver. 8. and the law had made him ſenſible of God's anger againſt ſin, and of his deſerving

deſerving death and hell for it, ver. 9. to 14, and from thence to the end of the chapter he deſcribes the conflict between the old man and the new, the one conſenting to the law, and the other reſiſting the law. In this conflict there were three ſharp attacks, in the firſt he found in himſelf two contrary principles of action always reſiſting each other, the old man fighting againſt the new, from ver. 14 to 18; ſecondly, when the will of the new man was good, thro' the oppoſition of the old man, it had not the deſired effect, ver. 19, 20; and thirdly, he felt in himſelf two contrary laws, both requiring obedience, the law of the members warring and rebelling againſt the law of God written in the renewed mind: for no ſooner did his mind, guided by the Holy ſpirit, ſet about any thing which God's law commanded, but he found the law of the members making a ſtrong reſiſtance. This he groaned under as an heavy burden, and was humbled for it before God, expecting pardon from him and victory every day, and perfect deliverance at laſt.

I cannot enlarge upon this chapter. Turn to it, and read it over upon the plan which I have here laid down, remembering all along, that St. Paul is deſcribing himſelf. He ten times ſays it is himſelf he is ſpeaking of, from ver. 7. to ver. 14. where he is ſhewing of what uſe the law had been to him, when he was firſt convinced of ſin,

and from thence to the end he mentions himſelf thirty-eight times. *I* the apoſtle Paul, *I myſelf*, my very ſelf, and not another; *I myſelf am*, now, at this preſent, at the very time of writing this; *I myſelf* whom the law of the ſpirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus hath made free from the law of ſin and death; I myſelf to whom now there is no condemnation, for I am *in* Chriſt Jeſus, and I walk after the Spirit, am ſtill at war with ſin that dwelleth in me, with the old man, with the fleſh, with the law of the members, with the body of ſin. Altho' I have a new nature, and God is on my ſide, yet it is a hard and a ſharp battle. I find it ſo. The length of it makes it ſtill more painful, and forces me to cry out, "O wretched "man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the "body of this death?" Paul was not out of God's favour, or accurſed, but as the word rendered *wretched* means, he was weary and tired with this continual fighting, troubled with the filthy motions of ſin riſing and ſtriving and rebelling in him, and giving him no reſt; this was ſuch a hard warfare, that he was ever looking out and praying, "Who ſhall deliver me?" He meant wholly, perfectly, deliver me from this corruption. He ſighed for it, not becauſe he doubted of an abſolute deliverance, but becauſe he had ſure and certain hope of it; not becauſe he was ignorant who his deliverer was, but becauſe he had ſtedfaſt faith in him. "Thanks be

"to

" to God through Jeſus Chriſt." This comforted him, and kept him fighting on with courage. He knew that he ſhould gain the victory, and thro' Chriſt, not thro' his own virtues or works, but thro' faith in the life and death, in the blood and righteouſneſs of Chriſt, he ſhould at laſt be more than conqueror.

Since this was the caſe with the apoſtle, who can expect a diſcharge from this warfare, until death? What! ſays one, is it to continue ſo long? Yes. The ſcripture is very clear to this point, as I was thirdly to ſhew.

The ſeat of the corruption of the old man or of the fleſh is not only in our nature, but is alſo our very nature itſelf. That which is born of the fleſh is fleſh, altogether carnal and corrupt. It is a filthy fountain always ſending forth impure ſtreams; and therefore while the believer is in the body, he muſt either be fighting againſt the fleſh, or elſe be led captive by it. We that are, ſays *Paul*, in this tabernacle of fleſh, do groan, being burdened with ſin and ſorrow. And when did they expect an end of their groaning, and reſt from their burdens? Not till the tabernacle was diſſolved by death. Ourſelves, ſays he, who have the firſt fruits of the ſpirit, even we ourſelves groan within ourſelves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. The body will be redeemed from the grave, and raiſed like the glorious body of Jeſus Chriſt; this

is

is promiſed, and this we wait for, and until death deliver us from this mortal corruptible body, we ſhall be groaning under the burden of it. This was St. *Paul*'s caſe. He had long ſighed to be diſcharged from his warfare, and like an old weary tired ſoldier, he wiſhed the hard tedious campaign was ended, that he might enter into reſt; but hear with what joy he at laſt cries out, "I have fought the good fight." Have fought it? What! is the battle over? Yes, juſt over.—"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of "my departure is at hand—I have finiſhed my "courſe."—My battle and my life are finiſhed together, and ſo muſt thine, reader: Thou art to reſiſt unto blood ſtriving againſt ſin: for thou art called to fight the good fight of faith, until thou lay hold of eternal life. Since thou art a believer, however weak, and haſt a new man in thee, as well as an old, they will be fighting againſt each other, till thou finiſh thy courſe. And if this diſcourage thee, conſider what God has ſpoken concerning this warfare, and what exceeding great and precious promiſes he has made to them who are engaged in it. He has promiſed to pardon thoſe corruptions of the old man, to ſubdue them, and to deliver thee from the very being of them. Canſt thou deſire more? Mark well what he ſays to thee, and be not faithleſs but believing.

Firſt,

Firſt, altho' the believer has an old man corrupt according to the deceitful luſts, always warring againſt the new man, yet the Lord God has promiſed a free and a full pardon; becauſe he has imputed ſin, all thy ſin, to the Son of his love, who bore it in his own body upon the tree. After the apoſtle in *Rom.* vii. had deſcribed the battle between them, he makes this inference, "There is therefore now no condemnation to "them who are in Chriſt Jeſus,"--to them who are *in* Chriſt, united by faith as members to him their head, and thereby partakers of his righteouſneſs, there is *now* while they are fighting againſt their corruptions no condemnation; "For, ſays he, the law of the ſpirit of life in "Chriſt Jeſus hath made me free from the law "of ſin and of death," *Rom.* viii. 2. Theſe words demonſtrate, that *Paul* was ſpeaking of himſelf in the 7th chapter. Altho' he had the corruption of nature ſtill in him, and was fighting againſt it, yet being in Chriſt by faith he was made free from the guilt and puniſhment due to it, therefore he had, and every believer ſhall have, a full pardon. In conſequence of which,

Secondly, he ſhall ſubdue the corruptions of the old man. This is promiſed and ſhall be made good. The Lord encourages believers to oppoſe the reign of ſin in their mortal body, and not to obey it in the luſts thereof, with this promiſe--"Sin ſhall not have dominion over you,"

Rom. vi. 14. Ye are under grace, and grace is almighty to ſubdue ſin: becauſe it is atoned for. In like manner he ſays to the Galatians v. 16. "Walk in the ſpirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the "luſts of the fleſh." Ye ſhall not fulfil them either in word or deed. The luſts of the fleſh will be in you, but not one of them ſhall reign over you: the ſpirit of Jeſus will teach you to reſiſt, and enable you to overcome them, yea to crucify and mortify them day by day. And beſides this the Lord has promiſed

Thirdly, deliverance from the very being of thy corruptions. The time is coming, when they ſhall not exiſt in the believer, nor any more be ſuffered to tempt him. He ſhall be made holy and blameleſs, without ſpot or wrinkle of ſin or any ſuch thing. In this perfect ſtate the Father now ſees him, and accepts him in the beloved, and after death admits the ſoul into his preſence cleanſed with the blood, cloathed with the righteouſneſs, adorned with the graces of his dear Son; and body, ſoul and ſpirit ſhall be in this perfect ſtate in the day of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt ---they ſhall be unblameable in holineſs before God, even our father, at the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt with all his ſaints. It doth not yet appear how great a perfection of holineſs this will be, but we know that when he ſhall appear we ſhall then be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is.

Such

Such are the divine promiſes. And doſt thou not ſee from hence, reader, what great things thou art to expect in thy preſent warfare? If thou ſayeſt, How ſhall I attain all that is promiſed? Know that it is to come to thee by faith. Chriſt and all that he has is thine upon believing, and particularly a free pardon for indwelling ſin, as well as for any other. Conſider him as thy ſurety God-man taking thy ſins and ſufferings upon himſelf to ſave thee from them. By his life and death he has obtained full ſalvation, which he gives to thee freely. And thou haſt received it, Thou canſt not deny but thou art a believer, and it is written--" All that believe are " juſtified from all things," from the corruption of their nature, as well as the corruptions of their lives. Know then, that there is no condemnation to thee. The Judge himſelf ſays ſo. And when he acquits, who ſhall lay any thing to thy charge? Here thou muſt hold through the power of the Lord, if thou wouldeſt have thy ſpiritual warfare ſucceſsfully conducted. Abide by the ſentence of God, and keep condemnation out of thy conſcience. Have it ready to plead againſt all charges from whatever quarter they come, that Chriſt hath made ME free from the law of ſin and of death.

Here I muſt refer thee back to what has been ſaid concerning Chriſt and his finiſhed ſalvation. Thou now ſeeſt how neceſſary it is thou ſhouldeſt

be well eſtabliſhed in the belief of his Godhead, and the infinite ſufficiency of his ſalvation; ſo that he is both able and willing to ſave thee from all thy ſins, and all the miſery due to them, and to beſtow upon thee eternal happineſs, and to bring thee by his almighty power ſafe to the eternal enjoyment of it. All this he will give thee, not for working but in believing. I entreat thee therefore to read again and again, what has been before ſaid upon theſe ſubjects, and the good Lord help thee to apply it to thy preſent caſe, that thou mayeſt be fully aſſured thou art in Chriſt, and that there is no condemnation to thee.

But perhaps thou art ready to ſay—Stedfaſtly do I believe all this; but I do not find ſuch victory over my corruptions as I could wiſh, nay I think at times they rage more than ever. Here thou forgetteſt the Lord thy ſtrength. Thou doſt not make uſe of him, and therefore thou faileſt. The woman with the bloody iſſue grew worſe and worſe, till ſhe went to Chriſt: ſo wilt thou. Why is it given thee to know Chriſt in the ſpirit, but that thou ſhouldſt go to him daily, and plead his promiſe---Lord, thou haſt declared that ſin ſhall not have dominion over thy people, I believe this word of thine cannot be broken; and therefore helpleſs in myſelf I rely upon thy faithfulneſs to ſave me from the dominion of ſuch and ſuch a ſin (as then tempts thee), Put forth thy power, O Lord Chriſt, and get thyſelf

glory in ſubduing my fleſh with its affections and luſts. And then truſt him to make his word good, and wait the event. Sooner ſhall heaven and earth paſs away, than ſin, any ſin thus left with Chriſt to be ſubdued ſhall reign over thee.

If thou ſayeſt, I think I ſeek for victory over ſin in no other way, and yet I do not attain it ſo completely, as I deſire. Depend upon it thou art under ſome miſtake: for Chriſt is almighty to fulfil every promiſe in its largeſt ſenſe and fulleſt meaning, and there never was a believer who could juſtly charge him with the breach of his word. Perhaps thou doſt believe, that power to ſubdue ſin comes from Chriſt, and thou art expecting it from him, but haſt thou not ſome legal dependance, ſome notion of thy own working together with him? Search and ſee. Doſt thou commit ALL to the Lord, who is to do ALL and in ALL? Is the whole battle left to him, wiſdom and courage, and armour, and ſtrength, and patience, and victory, are all from the Lord? If thou art not doing this ſimply, thou art not living by faith upon Chriſt, but thou art fighting in thine own ſtrength, and depending upon ſome inherent ſtock of grace, or knowledge, or experience. While theſe proud ſelfiſh motives put thee upon aſking his help, he will not give it thee: becauſe thou doſt not wholly depend upon him for it.

Or

Or perhaps Chriſt does not appear on thy ſide, becauſe thou art propoſing ſome wrong end. Thou art working and ſtriving againſt ſin to eſtabliſh a righteouſneſs of thine own, which is to be ſome part of thine acceptance before God, and thou haſt been trying in thine own ſtrength to get thy corruptions quite ſubdued, but they were too ſtrong for thee, and therefore now thou art glad to make uſe of Chriſt's help. And if he would do the work for thee, then thou would'ſt have confidence in the fleſh, and this thy fancied holineſs would be the ground of thy rejoicing before God. Is it not ſo? If it be, thou wilt never ſucceed upon this plan, Chriſt will not give his glory to another, nor put the crown of his goſpel grace upon the head of thy legal dependence.

Or perhaps thou art expecting from Chriſt what he has not promiſed, ſuch a victory over thy corruptions, that they ſhall not fight again for ſome time, or that they ſhall be quite dead and buried. And ſo they ſhall be in the Lord's appointed time. But now he calls upon thee to fight againſt them, he provides thee armour for that purpoſe, even the whole armour of God; and he requires thee to reſiſt unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin, promiſing thee daily victory. This is thy preſent ſtate of warfare. To this thou art now called, and there is no diſcharge in this war. O beware then, as thou loveſt thy ſoul,

of

of a falſe peace. Thou wilt be ſadly deluded, if thou ever ſuppoſeſt that thy fighting is over, before thy courſe be finiſhed. The good fight of faith muſt continue till death: for till then, corruption being in thee, thou muſt oppoſe it, relying upon God for promiſed victory over it. He is able to ſave thee from the very being of it now, as well as in heaven. But it is not his mind and will. Here he will have thee to live by faith, which is every moment to keep thee dependent upon Chriſt, or thou wilt fall. This is to exalt his grace, and to ſubdue thy ſelfiſh legal ſpirit; to humble thy pride, to put thee upon prayer and watchfulneſs, to make ſin more hateful, and heaven more deſirable, and to ſecure the glory of every victory to him, whoſe ſtrength is perfected in thy weakneſs. Theſe are ſome of his gracious purpoſes in keeping thee continually dependent upon his ſtrength; and if he has made thee willing to fight and conquer to the praiſe of the glory of his grace, then thou wilt experience that bleſſed promiſe—"ſin ſhall "not have dominion over thee." And it will not be long before ſin ſhall not have a being in thee.

Reader, if thou haſt fallen into theſe or any other miſtakes concerning the ſubduing of thy corruptions, mind what is written, and what is promiſed. Having firſt received thro' faith in the blood of Chriſt the pardon of thy ſin, then

as

as one of his good ſoldiers thou art to fight againſt it all thy life. He being on thy ſide promiſes to ſubdue ſin for thee. Without him thou canſt do nothing in this warfare, and therefore thy faith reſting on his promiſe is to wait the fulfilling of it. He has given thee his word, that he will uſe his almighty power for this purpoſe. To that word muſt thou look, believing that Chriſt will bring thee victory, continually, if thy faith fail not, greater, as thy faith increaſes, complete, when the good fight of faith ſhall be ended, and thou ſhalt reſt from thy labours. All this he ſtands engaged to do, and his power is able to fulfil his engagements, and thy faith will bring thee happy experience of his power. When corruptions riſe, temptations are ſtrong, enemies numerous, dangers on every ſide, that is the time to glorify Chriſt, by making uſe of his promiſed ſtrength. Then put thy truſt in the Captain of thy ſalvation, and fear not. Look unto Jeſus, and look at nothing but him. The battle is his. He will fight for thee, and thou ſhalt hold thy peace. Leave him to direct all, to do all, and to finiſh all relating to it; and then, as he can get all the glory, thou ſhalt ſee what a ſalvation he will bring thee. O that thy faith did but reach to the extent of his promiſes! How ſucceſsful would be thy ſpiritual warfare, ſuch victories over thine enemies, corruptions ſo ſubdued, the world ſo crucified, ſatan ſo defeated,

ſeated, as thou canſt now ſcarce believe? The Lord increaſe thy faith. Look up to him for it: becauſe as thy faith increaſes, let the battle grow hotter and hotter, thou wilt find thyſelf ſafer, and more reaſon to give thanks to God thro' Jeſus Chriſt thy Lord.

For want of attending to the important truths already conſidered, and of bringing them into conſtant uſe and exerciſe, young believers are liable to fall into another great miſtake, which keeps their faith weak, and ſtops its growth, namely, a hearkening to ſenſe, and truſting to its reports, which is the fifth general head I purpoſe to conſider.

They are ſeeking to be eſtabliſhed, and they think, that they ſhould have no doubt of their being true believers, if they had but the teſtimony of ſenſe, and comfortable feelings to aſſure them of it. And being uſed to judge in this way in other matters, for it is our ſtrongeſt evidence in natural things, they are diſpoſed to expect the ſame in ſpiritual; and they are the rather diſpoſed to it, becauſe ſenſible comforts are promiſed in ſcripture: which being very deſirable and pleaſing to nature, they are apt to covet them too much, and from not regarding what the ſcripture ſays about them, they are apt to ſeek them in a wrong way, and for a wrong end. Senſe judges from what it ſees, and draws its inferences from what it feels: ſo that its report

port to the conſcience, either of a believer's ſtate, or of his growth in it, is not from unchangeable things, which would ſettle the conſcience in peace, but from changeable things, which leave room for continual doubting. Senſe alſo looks at the fruits of faith more than at the object of it, and if the believer has been miſled, and taught to confound theſe two together, he will be at great uncertainty in judging of his ſtate: for inſtead of making the word of God, he will make his comforts the ground of his faith, and as theſe are more or leſs, ſo will his faith be. When he has comfortable feelings, then he will think himſelf a believer, and when he has none, then he will think himſelf an unbeliever, changing his judgment of himſelf, as his feelings do, like the wind, and varying as his comforts do, like the weather. This is a common caſe. I have ſeen the ſad effects of it in the lives of many of my acquaintance, who from being taught thus to judge of themſelves, were toſt about for ſeveral years, up and down, now comforted, then doubting, and could not get any ſolid eſtabliſhment, till the Word and Spirit of God convinced them, that ſenſe was not to be the ground of their believing, nor the object to which they were to look. Senſe judges by feeling, and reports what it ſees. Senſe ſays, now I am in the favour of God: for I feel it. Now he is my God: for I find him ſo, I am comforted.

comforted. Now he demonſtrates it to me: for I feel nearneſs to him in prayer, and ſweet anſwers. Now I am ſure my duties and ſervices are acceptable: for I am quite lively in them, and I come from them with warm affections. Now I cannot doubt: for I feel the aſſurance of his love to me. And when ſenſe has loſt thoſe comfortable feelings, then it draws contrary inferences---Now I am not in the favour of God: for I don't feel it. Now he is not my God: for I don't find him ſo, I am not comforted, &c. What can be the iſſue of this, but continual wavering and changing? For our feelings are ſometimes more, ſometimes leſs, as every believer experiences. What an unſettled ſtate then muſt he be in, who has no way to judge of himſelf, but by thoſe changeable things? What room does he leave for continual doubting, and what trouble and miſery does he thereby bring upon himſelf, as well as diſhonour, to the unchangeableneſs of God in his nature and promiſes?

If the poor weak believer ſhould ſay, I am convinced of this, and I ſhould be glad to have my faith ſo fixed, that I might be freed from doubts and fears. Then let it reſt upon the word of God, which is the only ground of believing, and is therefore called the word of faith, upon which faith is built, and by which it is nouriſhed and grows up. The believer ſhould

receive and rely upon what God hath ſpoken, and becauſe he hath ſpoken it: for his word changeth not. It abideth the ſame for ever; therefore what it truly reports, ſtands upon an immoveable rock. Senſe and feeling may report things contrary to it, but the believer can ſilence them with *God has ſpoken it*: for his faith has evidence of things not ſeen, and he does not form his judgement by the things which are ſeen, but by the things which are not ſeen. Generally ſpeaking faith judges the very contrary to what ſenſe does, and will not believe what ſenſe perceives. Abraham againſt hope believed in hope, ſo do all his children. They believe the pardon of ſin, victory over ſin, and the death of ſin, the immortality of the body, tho' crumbled to duſt and atoms, the ſecond coming of Chriſt, and the eternal ſtate of happineſs or miſery. Faith looks at God's word, calling the things which be not, as tho' they were, and is commonly forced to contradict ſenſe. Senſe judges from what it ſees---Faith from what God ſays. Senſe is governed by what appears---Faith by what God ſays ſhall be. Senſe looks inward---Faith looks outward. Faith can anſwer the ſeeming contradictions, which ſenſe oppoſes to it, from the word of God which cannot be broken. And when ſenſe is ready to deſpair, and all its fine frames and feelings are gone, then it is the believer's happy privilege ſtill to truſt in the Lord,

and

and to have a good hope becauſe of the word of his grace.

But perhaps thou art ready to ſay, it is written, that there is great joy and peace in believing, yea, joy unſpeakable and full of glory. True, theſe are what faith produces, and not what it is. Theſe are the fruits of faith, which it brings forth in moſt abundance from the inexhauſtible fulneſs of Jeſus. The more ſimple the believer is, the more he eyes Chriſt the object of faith, and the word the ground of faith, the more clear and diſtinct will the actings of his faith be, and conſequently it will bring greater peace into the conſcience, and more joy into the affections. But ſtill theſe fruits are not faith; no more than the fruit is the tree. The fruits do not go before faith, but follow it, and grow from it. This is God's order. He gives us his word to be the ground of our believing, and by believing all things promiſed in the word are made ours, then we go on comfortably, and are happy; but when ſenſe is put in the place of the word, then the conſequence is, that weak believers have got a changeable rule to judge of themſelves by, which hinders them from being eſtabliſhed in believing, and from attaining the promiſed peace and joy.

Some may begin to object, what! are you againſt all lively frames, and ſenſible comforts? No,

No, God forbid. I would have them ſpring from the right cauſe, that they might be more pure and fixed, than they commonly are. God's word and promiſes are an unchangeable foundation to reſt upon, even when ſenſible feelings are gone; becauſe Chriſt revealed in the word, and laid hold of in the promiſes, changeth not. Therefore, reader, for thine own ſake and for the glory of God, take heed what thou buildeſt thy faith upon. Beware of making any thing, that ſenſe reports to thee, the ground of it, but reſt it upon that which abideth for ever. The word of God is a ſure foundation. It will never fail thee. Thou mayeſt ſafely depend upon it, becauſe it cannot be broken, and ſtedfaſtly rely upon Chriſt to make its promiſes good to thee. There's thy object. Look at him. And ſince he is thine, thy Saviour and thy God, make uſe of him as ſuch, and truſt body and ſoul, and all things belonging to them in his hands, and among the reſt, thy comforts. Be content he ſhould give them to thee as ſeemeth him good. Set not thy heart upon them, nor follow him, as the multitude did for the ſake of his loaves and fiſhes, and the dainties that he gave them, who when theſe were with-held, ſoon forſook their kind Benefactor. Thou art by faith to make up all thy happineſs in him, and in him only; and he himſelf being thine, let him give thee or take away

away what he will beſides, thou haſt enough. What! is not this comfort enough, that thou haſt got the pearl of great price, the infinitely rich, ineſtimably precious Jeſus? Who has the wiſdom of God to contrive what is beſt for thee, boundleſs love to diſpoſe him, and almighty power to enable him to give it thee, and he has promiſed it; canſt thou deſire more? Walk then with him by faith, and not by ſight. When the word of God is the ground of thy faith, which reſts there and is grown to a fixed ſettlement, then thou wilt be enabled to go on comfortably, whatever thy frames and feelings be; yea, when theſe are at the loweſt ebb, thou wilt not be thereby diſcouraged. Suppoſe thou art walking in darkneſs, thou canſt walk by faith; becauſe thou haſt a promiſe, "Who is among you that walk-"eth in darkneſs and hath no light? Let him "truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay upon "his God," *Iſa.* l. 10. Still let him truſt and believe. Why? Becauſe God is *his* God ſtill. Mind that, his God ſtill, this bleſſed relation ſtill ſubſiſts, and faith may draw comfort from it in the darkeſt hour. Suppoſe thou art in heavineſs thro' manifold temptations, the word ſays to thee, "heavineſs may endure for a night, but "joy cometh in the morning," here thou mayeſt quiet thy heavy heart, and reſt with confidence, till the Lord deliver thee out of thy temptations. Suppoſe God hideth his face from thee, thou haſt the

the example of thoſe in the ſame caſe, " I will " wait for the Lord that hideth his face from " the houſe of Jacob, and will look for him," *Iſa.* viii. 17. Wait in faith looking for him, and thou ſhalt ſee the light of his countenance. Suppoſe all other comforts fail; thou haſt one ſtill, worth more than all.--" This God is my " God for ever and ever. He will never leave " me nor forſake me." This is the happineſs of the true believer, he is enabled to maintain his confidence, when ſenſible feelings are no more. And thou ſeeſt, reader, how this happineſs is attained, and how it is preſerved. It is by truſting to things which change not, the word of God, the Son of God and his promiſes, all which are in him, yea, made in him, and in him, Amen fulfilled by him. May the Lord help thee ſimply to truſt his word, and to live upon Chriſt for the fulfilling of it, and then thou wilt indeed get, what thou art now ſeeking in vain, a comfortable frame, and wilt be enabled to maintain it againſt all the diſcouragements of ſenſe. To that end ſearch the ſcriptures, which are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation; and let it be thy daily requeſt to the Lord, to make thee ſtrong in faith, that thou mayeſt not ſtagger at his promiſes through unbelief, but mayeſt againſt hope believe in hope. Beg of him, when ſenſe goes contrary to the word, to enable thee ſtill to believe it, and not to doubt of Chriſt's faithfulneſs

faithfulneſs to fulfil it--and aſk for ſtrength to walk every moment by faith and not by ſight. Thus the Lord will carry thee on ſafely and ſweetly from faith to faith, till thou receive the end of thy faith, even the ſalvation of thy ſoul. May it be ſo. Amen.

St. *Paul* has been my guide hitherto. He ſays, *Heb.* v. 13. that a babe in Chriſt is one who is unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs. To this determination of his, I have had an eye all along, and have accordingly endeavoured to remove thoſe hindrances out of the way of young beginners, which chiefly ariſe from their unſkilfulneſs in the word of righteouſneſs. Righteouſneſs ſignifies ſtrict juſtice, with reſpect to God it is paying him the full demands of his holy law: in this ſenſe there is none of us righteous, no not one. The God-man Chriſt Jeſus, the ſurety of his people, came to work out ſuch a righteouſneſs for them, and the word reveals it, ſets it before them in its infinite freeneſs, and in its infinite ſufficiency to juſtify from all things. The word is alſo the means in the hand of the Spirit, of bringing them with the heart to believe unto righteouſneſs, and therefore the ſcripture is called the word of righteouſneſs, and being unſkilful in it ſignifies want of experience in the management of it, unſkilful in the knowledge of the perſon of the Lord our righteouſneſs, who is true and very God, as well as true and very

man; unſkilful in the nature of his righteouſneſs, that it is abſolutely perfect and everlaſtingly meritorious, ſo that any ſinner by receiving it will be not only delivered from ſin, and all the miſeries due to ſin, but will alſo be entitled to life and glory; unſkilful in the gift of righteouſneſs, how freely God beſtows it, nothing being required to make it the ſinner's, but receiving it, and therefore it is called the righteouſneſs of faith: becauſe by faith he truſts in it for ſalvation, and for all its bleſſings in earth and heaven, and expects them as the fruits of righteouſneſs--unſkilful in experience, not knowing how to plead this righteouſneſs againſt the charges of the law, of conſcience, and of the accuſer of the brethren, and therefore apt to fall into a legal ſpirit, to be diſtreſſed in their warfare between the old man and the new, and to covet and to rely more upon ſenſible feelings, than upon the ſure teſtimony of God in his word. Theſe are ſome of the principal difficulties, which young believers meet with, and they all ariſe from their unſkilfulneſs in the word of righteouſneſs, and therefore I have particularly conſidered ſome ſcripture motives for removing them out of the way. And after thou haſt peruſed theſe motives, have they been the means of ſettling thy judgment, comforting thy conſcience, and ſtrengthening thy faith? Doſt thou ſee more of Chriſt's grace and power to ſave thee a ſinner than thou didſt

didſt before, and therefore canſt truſt him better, and in time of need make more uſe of his promiſed grace? If this be thy caſe, give him the glory, and may he carry thee on from ſtrength to ſtrength. But if thou haſt received no improvement from reading thus far--what is the reaſon? Perhaps thou art under ſome of the temptations here deſcribed. Search and ſee. And whatever it be, either in doctrine or experience, which hinders the increaſe of thy faith, may the Lord diſcover it to thee, and enable thee to overcome it, that thou mayeſt be no longer a babe unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs, but mayeſt grow up to be a young man ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The apoſtle *Paul* has directed me how to ſpeak to the babes in Chriſt; and another apoſtle ſhews how they grow up to be young men, and thereby he furniſhes me with matter for the ſecond part of this treatiſe on the life of faith, "I "have written unto you young men," ſays he, "becauſe ye are ſtrong and the word of God "abideth in you, and ye have overcome the "wicked one," 1 *John* ii. 14. Theſe young men knew the principles of the doctrine of Chriſt; they were eſtabliſhed in the belief of his Godhead, of the infinite ſufficiency of his ſalvation, of the free gift of all its graces and bleſſings promiſed to him that worketh not, and received by faith only, and all treaſured up for the believer's

uſe in the fulneſs of Chriſt Jeſus, to whom he is to bring nothing to recommend him, but the promiſe of the grace which he then wants, and a dependence upon Chriſt to ſupply that want. Theſe young men had attained to a good degree of knowledge and experience in theſe truths. They began to be able to keep the evidence of their union with Chriſt clear and diſtinct, and to improve it by their communion with him in all his offices. But notwithſtanding their eſtabliſhment in theſe points, they had many temptations and great difficulties--ſtill they knew but in part---ſtill they had a fleſhly corrupt nature to watch over and to fight againſt, always inclining them to truſt to the law, to their feeling, to any thing but Chriſt, and always diſpoſing them to yield to the ſuggeſtions of the devil, and to the allurements of the world. This warfare, inſtead of ceaſing grows hotter and hotter, but they grow ſtronger. It is the peculiar character of the young men in Chriſt *to be ſtrong:* they have learnt where their ſtrength lays, and they put it forth. They go down to battle not truſting in any power or might of their own, but ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He is their ſtrength. When the enemy cometh in like a flood, then to Jeſus they look for ſafety and victory--" O our God, we have no might againſt " this great company that cometh againſt us, " neither

" neither know we what to do, but our eyes are " upon thee." The abiding ſenſe of their own weakneſs keeps them dependent upon him, ſo that the more they feel of their helpleſſneſs, the ſtronger they grow: becauſe they live more upon Chriſt for ſtrength, which illuſtrates that ſeeming paradox of the apoſtle, " When I am weak, " then am I ſtrong"--when I am moſt ſenſible of my own weakneſs, then am I ſtrongeſt in the Lord, his ſtrength is then perfected in me. And his ſtrength is put forth in the effectual working of it by believing. It is not, neither can it be inherent in them, who without Chriſt can do nothing, but it is brought in by faith; nor does faith bring it in to lodge it, or lay it up in ſtore, till it ſhall be wanted, but when it is wanted, faith then regards the promiſe, looks up to Chriſt to fulfil it, and receives ſtrength out of his fulneſs. And being his, freely promiſed, and freely given, it is therefore called the ſtrength of grace. " Thou therefore, my ſon, ſays *Paul* to *Timothy*, " be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus." Strong faith gets ſtrong grace from Chriſt, according as it is written--" All things are poſſible " to him that believeth:" for according to his faith it ſhall be done unto him. If his faith reach to the full extent of the promiſes he ſhall find all things poſſible, which God hath promiſed, yea he ſhall be able to do all things thro' Chriſt ſtrengthening him.

This

This is the life of theſe young men in Chriſt. They are ſtrong in him, living upon his promiſed ſtrength, and by faith receiving it. They live not upon any thing in themſelves, but whatever they ſtand in need of, and whatever they have a promiſe for, that they expect ſhall be given them by the power of God their Saviour. They ſee themſelves, poor helpleſs creatures, full of continual wants, and no means in their own power to ſupply them. The ſenſe of this empties them of ſelf-greatneſs and ſelf-dependence, and the abiding ſenſe of this keeps them humble and dependent upon Chriſt. Thus the Lord teaches them how to live out of themſelves, and to be always receiving out of the Saviour's fulneſs grace for grace. They have his infinite ſtorehouſe to repair to, in which there is treaſured up for them every thing that they can poſſibly want. Happy for them their God has promiſed to ſupply all their need out of the riches of his grace in Chriſt Jeſus, and by faith they have an abundant ſupply to the praiſe of that God, who keepeth his promiſe for ever.

In him they live—he is the Lord and giver of ſpiritual life, as *Paul* ſays—I live, yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me. They are made ſtrong in him, " The Lord is the ſtrength of my life," ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* xxvii. 1. that life which I live by the faith of the Son of God has all its ſtrength from him.

And

And is continued by his power—" For none " can keep alive his own ſoul," *Pſ.* xxii. 29. " It is God who holdeth our ſoul in life," *Pſ.* lxvi. 9.

And is kept by faith—" Ye are kept by the " power of God thro' faith," 1 *Pet.* i. 5. Whatever ſtrength the believer wants to enable him to bear hardſhip, endure the croſs, fight his ſpiritual enemies, daily gain victories over them, he expects it from God, and thro' faith he receives it, and is kept—yea ſo kept

As to be confirmed unto the end. He that is able to keep believers from falling, will keep them until they receive the end of their faith, even the ſalvation of their ſouls. Thus the life which Chriſt begins by his grace he continues by his ſtrength; and every act of this ſpiritual life is from him. The will, the power is his; for he doeth all, and in all. Theſe young men were ſo well aſſured of this, that they lived upon Chriſt for ſtrength, and they received it; they were ſtrong in him. Their faith viewed him in his exalted ſtate with all power in heaven and earth, and engaged as their covenant head to uſe it for them, to make them and to keep them alive to God. On this power they depended. And whatever promiſe they had of its being uſed in their behalf, and pleaded it out at the throne of grace, and truſted Chriſt with the fulfilling of it; he never diſappointed them. They were made

ſtrong,

ſtrong, and ſtood faſt in the Lord; who never withdrew his ſupporting arm, therefore they never ceaſed to put their whole truſt and confidence in him.

When the enemy ſees them thus ſtrong in the Lord thro' faith it ſtirs up his deviliſh malice, and makes him burn with envious rage. He leaves no temptation untried to draw them from Chriſt. He is well ſkilled in cunning wiles and ſly devices for this purpoſe. He does not begin with tempting them to open ſin; that would at once diſcover his wicked deſign: but he artfully tries to ſap the foundation, and to weaken their faith. If he can get them from their dependence upon Chriſt, he carries his point; and too, too often he ſucceeds. Oh beware, reader, of every thing; ſuſpect it, let its appearance be ever ſo fair and good, which in the leaſt tends to weaken thy faſt hold of Chriſt. Cleave to him with full purpoſe of heart, as long as ever thou liveſt: for the enemy's whole plan is to ſeparate thee from him. Formerly he tried to do this by diſtreſſing thee about thy ſins—how they could be pardoned—whether being ſo great, ſo many, the blood of Chriſt could cleanſe from all: now thou haſt thro' believing received forgiveneſs of ſins, he will try to do the ſame by diſtreſſing thee about thy duties. Sometimes he will try to bring guilt into thy conſcience by ſuggeſting to thee thy many failings and ſhort comings in them---

the

the diſorder of thine imagination---thy wanderings in thy prayers---thy dulneſs in hearing and reading the word---the little life and power thou findeſt in thine attendance upon the ordinances---and the coldneſs of thy love to God and man. If he can get thee to dwell upon theſe things ſo as to forget Chriſt, then he has made way for this inſinuation. How could it be thus with thee, and thou a ſtrong believer? And if he can get thee to reaſon upon it, then he has thee faſt, thou art catched in his ſnare.

But if the Lord has taught thee not to be ignorant of ſatan's devices, as ſoon as the thought ariſes, whether thou art in Chriſt, becauſe of ſuch failings, thou wilt know from what quarter it comes, and wilt immediately reſiſt it. So that the temptation will make thee ſtand faſter; it will drive thee cloſer to Chriſt, make thy dependence ſtronger on his blood and righteouſneſs; put thee upon making more uſe of him as thy interceſſor and advocate with the Father, and help thee to live more out of thyſelf by faith upon him. Thus Chriſt becomes precious, thou art more humble. The ſnare is broken, and thou art delivered.

When the enemy ſees this, his implacable malice will ſoon tempt thee again. He has another deep laid ſtratagem relating to thy duties, and that is from their being unſucceſsful. Thou haſt had ſomething laid much upon thy heart, and thou

thou haſt carried it to God in prayer, and thou haſt waited long, but no anſwer comes. Upon this ſatan takes occaſion to ſuggeſt--Now you ſee God does not give you what you aſk, altho' he has promiſed, aſk and ye ſhall have; the fault cannot be in him, therefore it's plain you are not in his favour; his promiſes do not belong to you. And if he can thus work a little upon thy impatience, he will ſoon get thee into doubting and unbelief. Here thou mayeſt ſee how all the wiles of ſatan tend to one point; namely, to ſeparate thee from Chriſt, and how neceſſary then is it, that thou ſhouldeſt have this ſettled beyond all queſtion, that Chriſt and thou art one. If this be maintained in thy conſcience, then ſatan's ſtratagem is defeated: for Chriſt being thine he will give thee every thing that he has promiſed; and altho' thou haſt it not juſt at the time thou haſt fixed thyſelf, yet he knows beſt. Thou ſhalt certainly have it, if his infinite wiſdom ſees it good for thee, and if he does not ſee it good, his love will give thee ſomething better. Thy faith muſt wait God's time. Strong faith can wait long. Having ſuch a promiſe as this to depend upon--"they ſhall not be aſhamed who wait for me," *Iſa.* xlix. 23, thou mayeſt with confidence wait, and be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promiſes; who by faith regarded the promiſes, by patience waited for the fulfilling of them, and although they waited long,

long, yet they ſucceeded at laſt, and did inherit every grace and bleſſing, for which with faith and patience they had been waiting. Go, and do thou likewiſe.

Upon the failing of theſe temptations, the enemy has another ready. Since he cannot get thee off thy guard by bringing thee into doubting and unbelief, he will attack thy faith in another way. He will come like an angel of light, and ſeem to be Chriſt's friend and thine. He will allow thee to be a child of God, and to be ſtrong in faith. The more clearly thou art ſatisfied of thy union with Chriſt, the more will he improve, if thou art not aware, this thy certainty to his own wicked purpoſes. He will try to keep thine eye upon thy great graces and high gifts, he will flatter thee exceedingly upon them, and will tempt thee to view them with a ſecret delight, every now and then inſinuating, what a great chriſtian thou art---how few there are like thee---to what an exalted ſtate thou haſt attained---what temptations thou haſt overcome---what victories thou haſt gained over ſatan---and how ſafe thou art now, faſt upon the rock! And if he finds this pleaſing bait is not inſtantly rejected with a Get thee behind me, ſatan; then he will begin to work upon thy ſelf-love, and to give thee many plauſible reaſons for ſelf-admiration, ſo that thou ſhalt firſt look pleaſingly at, then fondly love, and at laſt ſacrilegiouſly dote upon

thy wonderous attainments. Thus he will lift thee up with pride, and will try to draw thee into his own crime, and into his own condemnation. What a dangerous temptation is this! How many have I known who fell into it! If thou ſayeſt, by what means ſhall I eſcape it? Mind the firſt approach: for it is coming upon thee, as ſoon as thou beginneſt to think of thyſelf more highly than thou oughteſt to think. Thou art in thyſelf a poor miſerable helpleſs ſinner, and to this very moment without Chriſt thou canſt do nothing. Thou canſt not do one good thing, nor overcome the weakeſt enemy, nor take one ſtep in the way to heaven, without Chriſt: nay thou canſt not think one good thought without him. What haſt thou then to be proud of, and to ſtir up thy ſelf-admiration? Nothing but ſin. The humble abiding ſenſe of this tends to thy ſafety: for while this is ever preſent with thee---"In me, that is in my fleſh, dwelleth no "good thing," it will lead thee to live by faith upon Chriſt for all good things. And being all his, and received every moment from him as his free gift, thou wilt be glorifying and exalting him in all and for all, knowing that he reſiſteth the proud, but he giveth grace unto the humble. The Lord keep thee humble, and then thou wilt have grace to eſcape this cunning wile of the devil.

If

If thou ſhalt ſay, alas I am fallen into it, How ſhall I recover myſelf? Remember his caſe who in his proſperity ſaid he never ſhould be moved, the favour of the Lord had made his mountain to ſtand ſo ſtrong, *Pſ.* xxx. 6, 7. He was too confident in himſelf, and was moved. How did he recover his ſtanding? "I cried unto the Lord, "and unto the Lord I made my ſupplication. "Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me, "Lord be thou my helper." His prayer was heard, he found mercy to pardon his offence, and help to raiſe him up, and his mourning, he ſays, was turned into joy and gladneſs. Look up as he did to the Lord Chriſt. Plead thy pardon through his promiſed mercy, and beg of him to enable thee to walk more humbly with thy God. Then ſhall the Pſalmiſt's experience be thine, and thou ſhalt eſcape the ſnare, which was laid for thy precious life.

Theſe young men having thus overcome the devices, which ſatan had contrived to weaken their faith, muſt expect a freſh attack from him. He will tempt them concerning the ground of faith. He ſees they are ſtrong, becauſe the word of God abideth in them, therefore he will uſe all his cunning and power to weaken their truſt in the word and promiſes of God. By the incorruptible ſeed of the word faith is begotten, and by the ſame word it is nouriſhed up, and ſtrengthened, growing exceedingly from faith to faith.

faith. The word, which is the ſole ground of faith, reveals the covenant made by the eternal Trinity for the ſalvation of ſinners, and makes many free promiſes of every covenant bleſſing to him that believeth. Theſe promiſes may moſt ſtedfaſtly be relied upon: becauſe of the unchangeable nature of God, who makes them. All his perfections are engaged for the fulfilling of his word; ſo that what he has ſpoken has an actual being and exiſtence. He ſays, and it is done---ſaying and doing are the ſame with him. Let there be ever ſo great a diſtance of time between the word ſpoken and the thing done, yet this is as real as any thing now in being: becauſe it exiſts in the mind and will of God, is revealed in his word, and by his faithfulneſs and almighty power is to be eſtabliſhed at the time appointed. How is it poſſible then that this word ſhould be broken? There is no matter of fact of more undoubted evidence, nothing in futurity, not even the riſing of the ſun to morrow, ſo fixed and certain as the accompliſhment of God's promiſes to him that believeth. Theſe young men in Chriſt were moſt aſſuredly perſuaded of this truth. They knew that heaven and earth ſhould paſs away before one tittle of God's promiſes ſhould fail. They looked upon them all as made in Chriſt, in him Yea and in him Amen, made in him, and fulfilled to him, as the head of the body the Church, and in him

fulfilled

fulfilled to all his members. As certainly as every one of them has been made good to him the head ſo will they be made good to his members. He has all power in heaven and earth committed to him for that very purpoſe. Whoever by believing is joined to him, he has thereby a right and title to every promiſe, and may boldly ſue it out in time of need: and then it is Chriſt's office and glory to fulfill the promiſe. If mountains of difficulties ſtand in the way, the believer need not fear or doubt. Chriſt is upon the throne. What are difficulties againſt his almighty power? beſides, Chriſt has already given him good ſecurity. He has put into his hands the pledges and earneſts of the promiſed inheritance, and how is it poſſible he ſhould fail in fulfilling his engagements, and putting him in due time into actual poſſeſſion? Read what the apoſtle ſays of this ſubject. Turn to the paſſage: for it is too long to quote, *Heb.* vi. from verſe 11 to the end of the chapter; in which you may obſerve theſe particulars.

1. The heirs of promiſe are apt to be full of doubt, and to have ſtrife in their conſciences about their right and title to all the graces and bleſſings of ſalvation:

2. God was willing out of his infinite mercy to eſtabliſh their right and title to them beyond diſpute, and to put an end to all ſtrife;

3. Therefore

3. Therefore he engaged by promiſe to give them all thoſe graces and bleſſings: and

4. To ſhew the unchangeableneſs of his will herein he confirmed the promiſe by an oath.

5. It is impoſſible that God ſhould lie in his promiſe, or that he ſhould be perjured in his oath.

6. Therefore here are two immutable things to ſtrengthen the faith and hopes of the heirs of promiſe.

7. While their faith reſts upon thoſe immutable things, it will always bring them ſtrong conſolation.

8. When enemies dangers, and temptations attack them, they are ſafe by fleeing for refuge, to lay hold of the hope ſet before them in God's immutable promiſes.

9. This hope will be as uſeful to them at ſuch times, as an anchor to a ſhip. By it they will ride out all the ſtorms of life, until Jeſus their forerunner bring them within the veil, where their anchor is now caſt, and put them into eternal poſſeſſion of all the promiſes.

With what rich and copious matter does this ſcripture abound, tending to ſhew the abſolute ſafety of reſting upon God's promiſes! How ſtrong are the arguments to perſuade the heirs of promiſe, to put their whole truſt and confidence in the faithfulneſs of their God! who having provided an infinitely glorious and everlaſting inheritance

ritance for them, was willing to make it over to them in the ſtrongeſt manner of conveyance, and therefore he has given them the promiſe and the oath of God, which cannot poſſibly change or alter, that their faith might never doubt or waver, and their hope might at all times be ſure and ſtedfaſt. And until he bring them to the inheritance itſelf, he has given them many ſweet and bleſſed promiſes of all things needful for their temporal and ſpiritual eſtate, upon which he would have them not only to live comfortably at preſent, but alſo to receive them as part of the inheritance, allowed them for their maintenance, till they come to age, and enter upon the poſſeſſion of the whole. And what God intended in his promiſe and oath, has its effects in a good degree among thoſe, who have the word of God abiding in them. They caſt their anchor where he commands them, and they are not only ſafe, but alſo, in time of the greateſt troubles and temptations have ſtrong conſolation. When enemies come, corruptions ariſe, and difficulties are in the way; they have a promiſe, and a promiſe-keeping God to depend upon. Whatever ſtreights they are in, the word abiding in them brings ſome promiſe of ſupport and deliverance: the promiſe ſhews what God has engaged to do, and faith receives the fulfilling of his engagements. When they draw nigh to God in duties, in ordinances, they know what he has promiſed to them that

wait upon him, and they judge him faithful who hath promiſed, and lo, he is preſent with them. In ſhort, while they live like themſelves as the heirs of promiſe, they are preſerved from all evil, and want no manner of thing that is good. This is their happy caſe, thrice happy becauſe the means uſed to deprive them of their happineſs are over-ruled of God for the eſtabliſhing it. The enemy rages againſt them, but in vain. He was a liar from the beginning. The word is truth, and he abode not in it, therefore he hates it, and with a greater hatred, becauſe the Lord has made it the means of ſtrengthening thoſe believers. He knows that all his temptations will be fruitleſs, while the word abideth in them. He fears no weapon formed againſt him, like the ſword of the Spirit: he has felt its ſharpneſs and its power; with it the Captain of our ſalvation cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon, and with it all his good ſoldiers reſiſt the devil, and make him flee from them. For theſe reaſons he has great variety of temptations to weaken the believer's truſt in the word, and his reliance upon the promiſes of God.

Sometimes he attacks them in a matter where his hopes are founded in their ignorance: he is cunning to ſpy out the particular way in which they have been led, and their readineſs to maintain their ground, by making uſe of the promiſes ſuited to that way. He reſolves therefore upon

ſome new temptation, with which they have never been exerciſed; and he watches the favourable opportunity to injeƈt it with all his ſtrength. Upon his doing it, the ſoul is put into a great hurry, becauſe it has no promiſe ready to apply to the preſent caſe: for want of which the underſtanding is confuſed, faith wavers, doubt enters and ſatan carries his point. This demonſtrates the neceſſity of ſearching the ſcriptures, and meditating upon them night and day. In them God has graciouſly treaſured up all ſorts of promiſes. There is not a poſſible caſe for a believer to be in of ſpiritual or temporal concern, but there is a promiſe ſuitable to it, which he ought to have ready againſt the hour of temptation. If he has not, he negleƈts the Lord's kind proviſion, and lays himſelf open to the enemy's attack. Reader, if thou wouldeſt not be ignorant of ſatan's devices, follow Chriſt's counſel --Search the ſcriptures. Remember, they are able to make thee wiſe unto ſalvation, thro' faith in Chriſt Jeſus: therefore ſtore up his promiſes--pray him to ſanƈtify thy memory to retain them, and to enable thee to make uſe of them in every time of need.

If this temptation fail, the enemy will ſoon have another ready. I have known him often try, and often ſucceed in endeavouring to take off the attention from the moſt eaſy parts of ſcripture, and to fix it upon thoſe parts which are

hard to be underſtood. Upon thoſe the believer dwells two much, and puzzles himſelf. His head grows confuſed. He conſults commentators, and they confuſe him more. And if he does not fall from hence into queſtioning the truth of ſcripture, yet he certainly neglects the right uſe of it, forgetting it is the means of building himſelf up in his moſt holy faith. Reader, whenever thou art tempted about difficult texts, look up to the incarnate Word, and pray him by his Spirit to open thine underſtanding, that thou mayeſt know what thou readeſt, and if thou ſtill doſt not find the meaning of them made plain to thee, paſs them by for that time. Don't puzzle and diſtreſs thyſelf about them. Perhaps when thou meeteſt with them again, they will appear eaſy, and Chriſt will give thee light to ſee and to comprehend them.

If thou ſayeſt, I do look up to him to teach me, but nevertheleſs, I find many hard and difficult texts. Remember thou knoweſt but in part, and therefore thou ſtandeſt in need of daily teaching. Theſe texts are profitable, if they humble thee, and make thee live more upon the teaching of the divine Prophet. The humbler thou art, thou wilt be the more teachable. The lower thou ſitteſt at his feet to hear his words, thou wilt learn the moſt. The Maſter himſelf has declared, "Whoſoever ſhall humble himſelf as a little "child, the ſame is the greateſt in the kingdom

"of

" of heaven." If theſe difficult texts thus humble thee, and make thee live more upon Chriſt's inward teaching, they will be the means of thy growth in ſaving knowledge. Thy hearing and reading the word in a conſtant dependence upon him, will keep thee from the dangerous errors, and hereſies of the times. Moſt of thoſe ariſe from unlearned and unſtable men, full of pride and ſelf-conceit, whom God reſiſteth, but he giveth grace to the humble.

If he has given thee grace to hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt learned and been aſſured of, the enemy will change his attack, and purſue thee with new temptations. Envious of thy happineſs he will be often aſſaulting thee, and trying to move thee from thy ſtedfaſtneſs. He will at times inſinuate every lye that he can raiſe againſt the word of God, and he will not begin with reaſon or argument, but by way of ſurpriſe, with ſudden injections darting into the mind doubts, like theſe--How do I know the ſcripture is inſpired? What proof have I? And if theſe be not immediately rejected, he will follow them like lightening with others: How can that be inſpired which is full of contradictions, and full of doctrines above reaſon? Who can defend the matters of fact related in it? The language is low and mean, unworthy of God--the ſcripture is falſe--perhaps there is neither God nor devil.

Theſe blaſphemous thoughts ſometimes put the believer into a hurry and confuſion, and thro' the ſuddenneſs and violence of them greatly diſtreſs him. The apoſtle calls theſe aſſaults "the "fiery darts of the wicked one"--darts, becauſe he throws them with all his might againſt the ſoul, and fiery, becauſe he would have them to catch hold of, and to inflame its corruptions and luſts. And they do, if the ſhield of faith be not ready to ſtop their force, and to quench their fire. This is a piece of the armour of God prepared for the believer's ſafety at ſuch times, and the right uſe of it is this: The Lord having promiſed to be a ſhield to them that put their truſt in him, and to compaſs them about with his favour as with a ſhield, the believer looks up when theſe fiery darts are flying thick about him, and ſays, --"O Lord God of hoſts, who haſt promiſed "that thy faithfulneſs and truth ſhould be my "ſhield and buckler, now eſtabliſh thy word "unto thy ſervant. In thee, O my God, do I "put my truſt, ſave me in this hour of tempta-"tion." Then the battle becomes the Lord's. He is engaged to put forth his ſtrength to ſhield thee from the enemy. Thus thou ſhalt conquer, and ſhalt happily experience what is written--"Reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you."

He will flee for a ſeaſon, but will return again. He has other temptations, and he will try them all to diſparage the word of God, and to leſſen the

the believer's confidence in it. Sometimes he will inſinuate---how can theſe things be---in what way or by what means can ſuch a promiſe be fulfilled? If you begin to reaſon upon the point, he will get you from your ſtrong-hold and conquer you. Beware of his lies, and have always your anſwer ready---"It is written." What God hath ſaid put your truſt in, if all the world gainſay it: for he is faithful who hath promiſed, and all things are poſſible with him.

If this temptation does not ſucceed, and he cannot bring you to doubt of the truth of the promiſes, then he will try you about your right to them. When you are in darkneſs or walking heavily, in ſickneſs or any trouble, and you have been praying for deliverance, but Chriſt does not preſently anſwer you, then he has a favourable opportunity to ſuggeſt---Now you ſee the promiſes do not belong to you, Chriſt will not hear you, and therefore you have been deceiving yourſelf with a vain notion of faith. This is a common temptation, againſt which ſtill oppoſe---"It is written." Thy caſe be it what it will, has a promiſe, either of ſupport or deliverance. If thou art not delivered, yet if Chriſt ſupport thee, ſo that thy faith and patience fail not, does not this ſhew his infinite goodneſs to thee? He will have thy faith tried, and he will put it into the fire, not to conſume it, but that it may come like gold out of the furnace purer and brighter.

And

And what if thou art in the fire a great while, thou wilt ſee more of his tender mercies in keeping thee there, and wilt thereby learn to live in a more ſimple dependence upon him. Caſt not away therefore thy confidence in the written word. The promiſes in it ſtand faſter than the ſtrong mountains. If all the powers in earth and hell ſhould join, they cannot defeat one ſingle tittle of them. When the world and all the works therein ſhall be burnt up, and the place of them ſhall be no more found, then the promiſes ſhall ſtand faſt as the throne of God, and ſhall receive their full and perfect accompliſhment through the ages of eternity.

Theſe are ſome of ſatan's temptations againſt the young men in Chriſt, who are ſtrong, becauſe the word of God abideth in them, His deſign is to weaken their reliance upon its promiſes. Till he can do this, he deſpairs of ſucceſs; and therefore he tries every method, which his wicked cunning and rage can invent. His buſy active ſpirit is night and day plotting againſt the word of God. See a lively picture of his utter hatred to it in the parable of the ſower. While the good ſeed is ſowing, the devil is indefatigable in picking it up. He exerciſes all his wiles to keep it out of the hearers hearts, and he prevails with the greater part to reject it, among thoſe who ſeemingly receive it, he cheats three out of four, ſo that the word does not take root, nor bear fruit to perfection. Since ſatan is thus ſucceſsful,

ceſsful, is it not abſolutely neceſſary, reader, that thou ſhouldeſt be well acquainted with his devices? And the word abiding in thee, the ingrafted word, will both make thee acquainted with them, and alſo ſtrong to reſiſt them: becauſe then thou wilt be taught by Chriſt's wiſdom and ſtrengthened by his almighty power. As thou groweſt in the ſenſe of thy want of him, and liveſt in a cloſer dependence upon him, thou wilt underſtand more of his word, and experience more of his power. By which means the enemy's continual attacks, driving thee to Chriſt for the fulfilling of his promiſes, will make thee continually ſafe. Let the roaring lion rage, what haſt thou to fear? Let him go about ſeeking whom he may devour, the Lord is thy ſhield and thy defence: in him is thy truſt. Thou haſt his promiſe, that he will preſerve thee from all evil, and will make all things, even ſatan's ſpite and rage againſt thee, work together for thy good. How dear and precious then ſhould the word of God be to thee! If thou art weak, becauſe it is the means of thy growing, and being nouriſhed up; and if thou art ſtrong, becauſe by its abiding in thee, thou wilt be eſtabliſhed. May it be thy ſtudy and thy delight, and may every reading of it bring thee to a better acquaintance with, and a greater dependence upon the adorable Jeſus. And if thou deſireſt thus to profit from the ſcriptures, I would adviſe thee, reader,

reader, to obſerve two things, which will be much for Chriſt's glory, and for thy edification.

Firſt, in thy frequent and careful peruſal of the Bible (and mind, thou canſt not read it too much) take particular notice of the promiſes, which are moſt ſuited to thy age, ſtate, and condition in life: becauſe theſe God has graciouſly made for thy uſe, and about theſe the enemy will be moſt buſy with thee. Treaſure them up then in thy memory, and have them ready againſt the time of need, looking up,

Secondly, to Chriſt for the fulfilling of them. All the promiſes are made in him, and made good by him: thou art therefore in an humble dependence upon his faithfulneſs and power to expect whatever thou wanteſt, and he has promiſed. Truſt him, and he will not fail thee. Stagger not at any of his promiſes thro' the ſeeming impoſſibility of their being made good; but depend upon his almighty power, and thou wilt find him a faithful promiſe-keeping God, whoſe word ſtandeth faſt for ever and ever.

Thus thou ſhalt not only be ſafe but ſhalt alſo overcome the wicked one, which the apoſtle John makes the laſt part of their character, who are ſtrong in the Lord. They overcome him by the ſtrength of their faith. They hold faſt their confidence in the Lord's promiſed ſtrength, and he fights for them. That mighty arm which bruiſed the ſerpent's head, brings them victory,

as

as it is written of that noble army mentioned *Rev.* xii. 11. "They overcame the accuſer of "the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and "by the word of their teſtimony." Thro' faith in his blood they were pardoned and juſtified freely, and they knew that in him they had righteouſneſs and ſtrength, therefore they were at peace with God, and the accuſer of the brethren could not lay any thing to their charge. Thus they were delivered from his power, and tranſlated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and they teſtified this by adhering to the word of truth. They believed that whatever Chriſt had therein promiſed, he would fulfil to them, and they bore their teſtimony to their being ſafe in depending upon his word in the moſt trying circumſtances. They would not give it up whatever they loſt for truſting to it: nay, they ſtuck ſtedfaſtly to its truth, altho' it coſt them their lives for maintaining their teſtimony: for it is ſaid of them, "they loved not their lives unto "the death," that is, they loved the truth more than life, they were not afraid publicly to own, that their truſt and confidence was in the blood of the Lamb, and they believed they ſhould be infinite and everlaſting gainers by holding faſt the word of their teſtimony unto death. And the Lord was with them, and mightily ſtrengthened them, ſo that they joyfully ſealed their teſtimony with their blood, although they died in flames,

flames, and in the moſt exquiſite torments. Thus they overcame ſatan. A moſt noble company of thoſe conquerors are now ſtanding round the throne of the Lamb, enjoying his exceeding great and precious promiſes: he has crowned them with glory---he has cloathed them with robes waſhed and made white in his own blood---he has wiped away all tears from their eyes, and taken all cauſe of ſorrow from their hearts---he has put palms into their hands, to ſhew that they are eternal conquerors, and that they ſhall ſtand confirmed in bliſs for ever and ever. May thou and I, reader, ere long, join them; and until that happy time come, may our faith be daily more eſtabliſhed in the blood and righteouſneſs of the Lamb of God, that we may be growing in our love to him, and in our dependence upon him, until he admit us to ſee him as he is.

Thro' much exerciſe and fighting theſe young men, ſtrong and mighty in the ſcriptures, grow up to be fathers in Chriſt; whoſe character is thus drawn by the apoſtle *John*, 1 *Epiſ.* ii. 14. "I have written unto you fathers, becauſe ye "have known him that is from the beginning," namely Jeſus Chriſt, whoſe ſtile and title it is to be from the beginning, as he himſelf ſpeaks in *Prov.* viii. 22, 23. "The Lord poſſeſſed me in "the beginning of his way, before his works of "old. I was ſet up from everlaſting, from the "beginning, or ever the earth was." He was a perſon

perſon in the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, but was ſet up in his office-character from everlaſting to be the beginning of the ways and works of God. Upon account of what he was to do and ſuffer in man's nature according to the grace of the covenant of the ever-bleſſed Trinity, he was the Creator, and is the Preſerver of the univerſe: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, and by him all things ſubſiſt; and he is the beginning, the firſt cauſe of all things in nature, and alſo in grace, the head of the body the church. In the ſame manner our Lord ſpeaks of himſelf, *Rev.* i. 1. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and "the ending ſaith the Lord, which is, and which "was, and which is to come the Almighty." He is in and from the beginning, being the firſt cauſe of all the divine works in creation, in providence, and in redemption, the Author and the Finiſher, the Firſt and the Laſt in all, which ſhews the great propriety of deſcribing him here by this name. The apoſtle is treating of the higheſt ſtate of a believer, and he ſays it conſiſts in knowing, that Jeſus Chriſt is all and in all. Whatever good there is in his kingdom of nature, from him it had its beginning, and by him it is preſerved: whatever good there is in his kingdom of grace, he is the author of it, by his power it is continued, and when brought to

perfection

perfection he is the finiſher. He is the beginning, he is the ending of all the counſels, and of all the works of God. In this light theſe fathers had learned to conſider the Lord Jeſus: they knew that he was to do all for them, and in them, and by them; they not only knew it ſpeculatively, but had alſo experimental knowledge of it. "Ye have known him that is from "the beginning," have known him, and tried him, and found him to be what his name ſignifies. And this is the right knowledge of Chriſt---not ſuch as the devil has; he could ſay, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God---not ſuch as too many nominal chriſtians have, who profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him---not ſuch as many profeſſors attain, for whom it had been better not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after they had known it to turn from it. Theſe fathers knew Chriſt by the inward teaching of his Word and Spirit, whereby he made himſelf known to them, as he does not to others. For he fulfilled to them the great promiſe of the new covenant---"I will give them a heart to know me, that I "am the Lord, and they ſhall be my peeple, "and I will be their God," *Jer.* xxiv. 7. The covenant is well ordered in all things and ſure, particularly with reſpect to the quickening of the ſoul from a death in treſpaſſes and ſins, and to the renewing of its faculties, that they may be

be capable of knowing God, and to the enlightening them, that the light of the glorious goſpel of Chriſt may ſhine unto them, even unto the heart, enlivening it with holy and heavenly affection to the perſon, to the offices, and to the glories of the bleſſed Immanuel. Whereby the believer, thus taught of God to know him aright, can now truſt him, hope in him, and love him; which graces are ſtrengthened from the conſideration of God's ſtanding related to him as his covenant-God, and of his being one of God's redeemed people: from which relations he has a right to, and by faith may enjoy every covenant-mercy in time, and ſhall be a partaker of them all in eternity. This is the knowledge, concerning which ſo many and ſuch great things are ſpoken in ſcripture, and which St. *John* ſays theſe fathers had received: they had attained by the Spirit of Wiſdom and revelation to that knowledge of Chriſt, which is life eternal; and the ſame Spirit enabled them to be continually growing and increaſing in the knowledge of Chriſt. As he ſhines more clearly into their hearts, he diſcovers to them more of their wants. He makes them better acquainted with themſelves, and lets them feel more of the workings of their corrupt nature, and of their own entire helpleſſneſs. Thus by his light they ſee deeper into that myſtery of iniquity, which is in them, and they grow in the ſenſe and experience of it all

all their lives. Day by day ſome failing, ſhort coming, infirmity or temptation leads them to more lowly and humbling views of themſelves, and brings them freſh diſcoveries of their fallen and helpleſs ſtate. While they attend to what is paſſing in their own breaſts, every moment ſomething will be ſpeaking for Chriſt---" Without me ye can do nothing." It is this abiding ſenſe of their wants, and faith in his promiſes to ſupply them, which lead them to be conſtantly looking unto Jeſus. Many wants do not diſcourage them, for his promiſes are as many as their wants can be—nor great wants, for he has given them exceeding great promiſes---nor continual wants, for he has promiſed them grace every moment. As they grow in the knowledge of themſelves, they ſee more need of living upon Chriſt in the ſeveral offices, which he ſuſtains. The daily experience which they have of their own ignorance, and ſinfulneſs and helpleſſeneſs endear to them their divine Prophet, Prieſt, and King. The continual ſenſe of their want of him makes them glad to live in a ſettled fixed dependence upon his fulneſs, and to be always receiving out of it. They would not live otherwiſe if they could. They know that their dear Saviour will manage better for them than they could for themſelves. He has taken their affairs ſpiritual and temporal into his hands, and he can make no miſtakes. His infinite love is guided

guided by unerring wiſdom, and its bleſſings are beſtowed by almighty power. Happy for them, they and theirs are under the care of this beſt of friends, They know it, and are ſenſible of their happineſs. Daily experience brings them freſh proofs of the love and power of Jeſus; which makes them wiſh for more, ſtill more faith, that they may glorify their bleſſed Saviour by truſting him more. However, in this they are growing, increaſing day by day in their knowledge of the ſalvation, and gaining a cloſer acquaintance and fellowſhip with the perſon of God their Saviour, until they come to ſee him as he is.

This is the character of thoſe believers who are ſtedfaſt in the faith, and are become fathers, able now to teach others alſo. They have attained to that knowledge of Chriſt, which is life eternal, and they are daily preſſing forward. What they already know of him increaſes their deſire to know more. And by being always converſant with him, (for without him they can do nothing) they have continual opportunities of making new diſcoveries. In him are laid up treaſures of every thing that is great and good. His riches are unſearchable, infinite and eternal. There is no coming to the end of them. Believers are perſuaded of it, and therefore they try to dig deep into this golden mine. It is all theirs. The farther they go, the more is their

faith ſtrengthened, and the more precious Chriſt becomes: for they find ſuch an excellency in the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus their Lord, that their ſouls hunger and thirſt to know more of him. The more they attain, the more the appetite increaſes, and nothing can perfectly ſatisfy it, but the full enjoyment of Chriſt in glory, when they ſhall know, even as alſo they are known. Till that bleſſed time come, they will be growing in grace, and in the knowledge of God their Saviour.

This is the diſtinguiſhing mark of theſe fathers, they are preſſing forward. They have not yet attained to the perfect knowledge of Chriſt, but they are going on to perfection: and they make an happy progreſs. God meets them in and bleſſes the means, which he has appointed for their daily growth. In thoſe he requires them to depend and to wait upon him, and he gives them clearer diſcoveries of the adorable perſon, and of the gracious offices of the Lord Chriſt, and thereby enables them to live more by faith upon him, for all things belonging to their temporal, their ſpiritual, and their eternal concerns. Theſe particulars will include the principal acts of the life of faith, and while we take a ſhort view of them, may every page, reader, be made the means of increaſing and ſtrengthening thy faith in the Lord Jeſus.

First,

First, they grow in the knowledge of his person, which is altogether wonderful; so that they can never come to the end of his perfections, nor to eternity can they shew forth all his praise; for he is God and man in one Christ---Jehovah incarnate---Immanuel, God with us. This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh: in which he came amongst us, that he might be the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven; that as the first Adam by sin had ruined all those who are born of him after the flesh, so the second Adam might save all those who are born of him after the Spirit. And for this end he has all power in heaven and earth committed to him, he has all fulness, yea the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, that he might be the head of the body the church, and that out of his fulness his members might be receiving grace in time and glory in eternity. Of this divine Person all the prophets have spoken since the world began; and what they have spoken in many words the apostle sums up in a short description, *Col.* i. 15, *&c.* where he is treating of that Person in the Godhead, who covenanted to come into the world to save sinners; "who is the image of the invisible God, the "first-born of every creature: for by him were "all things created that are in heaven, and that "are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they "be thrones or dominions, or principalities or

" powers, all things were created by him and " for him, and he is before all things, and by " him all things conſiſt. And he is the Head of " the body the church, who is the beginning, " the firſt-born from the dead, that in all things " he might have the pre-eminence, for it pleaſed " the Father that in him ſhould all fulneſs " dwell." In which words theſe three glorious truths are declared of Chriſt Jeſus; firſt, that he created all things viſible and inviſible; ſecondly, that he upholds them all by the word of his power; thirdly, that he has redeemed unto himſelf a peculiar people thro' his own blood, who are his church, and he is to them what the head is to the body, the head of authority, the firſt in rank and dignity, and the head of influence, from whom life and motion and ſenſe are communicated to all his members: for in him they live and move and have their being. In all things he is firſt, or has the pre-eminence, he is Jehovah the Creator and the Preſerver of all things, Jehovah incarnate, the Head of his church, and the Saviour of the body. This is the bleſſed Object of faith: and what can there be conceived beautiful, uſeful, or happy, what excellency is there or perfection, which is not in its higheſt degree in this moſt adorable God-man? What can a believer want, what can his heart deſire, which is not here treaſured up for his uſe? Here is a Surety perfectly qualified, as man to act and ſuffer

fer for man, as God to merit infinitely and eternally by what he did and ſuffered, and as God-man he has now all fulneſs of wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and holineſs, and ſtrength, and every thing needful for his peoples' happineſs. Whither then ſhould they go, but to him for every grace and bleſſing? And to him they do repair, according to the command—" Look unto me and " be ye ſaved all the ends of the earth," *Iſa.* xlv. 22. The promiſe to them, who are looking unto him, is very extenſive---" My God ſhall ſupply " all your need according to his riches in glory " by Chriſt Jeſus," *Phil.* iv. 19. By him they expect a continual ſupply of all their temporal and ſpiritual needs, and therefore on him they would have their eyes ever fixt, looking unto Jeſus. While by faith their eyes are kept ſteady upon him, they will be diſcovering ſomething new in this wonderful God-man, and receiving ſomething out of his fulneſs, to ſtrengthen their hopes, and to inflame their affections. He will grow more lovely in their ſight, freſh beauties will diſcover themſelves, new worlds of delight will appear: for all the glories of heaven and earth ſhine in their fulleſt luſtre in his perſon. The believer ſees them at preſent: for by faith he can ſee him that is inviſible, and although he has not ſuch a perfect viſion, as they have who ſtanding round his throne ſee him face to face, yet he hopes to enjoy it ſoon: and he has

has even now this peculiar pleaſure in viewing the glories of his God and Saviour, that he can truly ſay of him---" this is my Beloved, and my " Friend," here I fix, and on him I reſt; I want to look no where elſe for any good, ſince it all meets and centres in one object: for it hath pleaſed the Father and the eternal Spirit, that all fulneſs ſhould dwell in the Son of God, and he is my beloved Saviour, and my deareſt Friend; he is the Chief among ten thouſand in my affection, yea he is altogether lovely. The more I live by faith upon him, the more I love him: for I experience ſuch tender compaſſion in his heart, and ſuch a kind concern for me and my intereſt, that the love of Chriſt conſtrains me to love him again. He endears his perſon to me by continual favours. I do love him, but not ſo much as he deſerves. I would increaſe, and abound more and more in love to him, as his mercies increaſe and abound to me; but a grateful ſenſe of them, and love to him for them are his own gifts, for which, as well as for his mercies, I muſt be content to be indebted to him for ever and ever. Lord ſhed more of thy precious love abroad in my heart; enlarge it in true affection to thee, and make all that is within me bleſs thy holy name.

Reader, ſtop a little here, and conſider: Art thou one of theſe believers? Haſt thou a warm heart for the perſon of Chriſt? Doſt thou ſee in

him

him, and in its higheſt degree every thing that is lovely, and art thou growing and abounding in love to him? If this be thy preſent happineſs, thou wilt find many powerful motives to increaſe it in the 45th and 42d Pſalms. Read them, and ſee whether thou canſt ſo mix faith with what is ſaid in them of the incarnate God, as to conclude with David---" Whom have I in heaven, " but thee, and there is none upon earth, that " I deſire beſides thee." If thy heart be thus enamoured with his love, then thou haſt got a key to the book of Canticles; for thou art the ſpouſe of Chriſt. Mayeſt thou experience what is therein ſaid of the glories of thy heavenly Bridegroom, and mayeſt thou grow in love to his adorable Perſon, by finding continual tokens of his love to thy ſoul in the ſeveral offices, which he ſuſtains for the diſpenſing of his favours. In theſe offices he is always endearing himſelf to his people. And this is the

Second thing, whereby the fathers in Chriſt grow in the knowledge of him. There is not a want, which ſin has brought upon believers, but there is an office in Chriſt, where it may be ſupplied; and the ſenſe and feeling of that want, leading them to truſt in him upon the warrant of his word and promiſe, will certainly bring them a ſupply in the hour of need. His offices are many, but they may be all included in theſe

five.

five. He is the Saviour, the Prophet, the Prieſt, the King, and the Advocate of his people.

The SAVIOUR, Jeſus, a dear name, deſcriptive of his infinite grace, and ſweetly ſuited to the ſinner's wants. Whatever pollution or guilt he has contracted, whatever miſery he deſerves to ſuffer in time or in eternity, Jeſus is Jehovah, almighty to ſave him: for he was called Jeſus, becauſe he was to ſave his people from their ſins. Whatever they ſtand in need of to make them happy, wiſdom, righteouſneſs, holineſs, comfort or ſtrength, it is all in the fulneſs of Jeſus, freely promiſed, and by faith received, as it is written, "Ye are ſaved freely by grace thro' faith," and ſaved for ever: for Jeſus is the Author of eternal ſalvation. The ſpirits of juſt men made perfect in glory, are ſaid to be crying with a loud voice,---"Salvation to our God, who ſitteth upon "the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and "ever." So that the name Jeſus is dear and precious to the ſaints in heaven; they are happily employed in aſcribing the glory of their eternal ſalvation to the Lamb of God. And the believer has at preſent a part of their happineſs: for Jeſus is the Saviour. He can truſt him for all the promiſed bleſſings of his ſalvation, and live by faith upon him for the receiving them. As every moment ſome of them are wanted, ſo the Saviour's love in beſtowing them is more experienced;

rienced; faith in him is thereby ſtrengthened, and love to him increaſed. And theſe graces will be continually growing, while the believer views the ſtate of guilt and miſery, from which Jeſus has ſaved him, the ſtate of ſafety in which he has placed him, and the bleſſings which he has promiſed him in life and death and in eternity. Muſt not ſuch a Saviour become more precious for continuing day by day ſuch free and unmerited benefits? And who can receive them, ſenſible of his unworthineſs, without rejoicing in ſuch a ſalvation, and admiring and adoring the goodneſs of the Saviour? Oh moſt bleſſed Jeſus, increaſe the faith of thy people, that they may glorify thee more by depending upon thee for all the promiſed bleſſings of thy ſalvation. Teach them how to do this as the great

PROPHET of the houſe of God. This is another of his gracious offices, ſuited to the ignorance of his people: for when ſin ſeparated them from God, they then loſt the light of life, and had no means left in their own power to diſcover God and the things of God. Hear what two infallible witneſſes ſay to this fact---"There "is none that underſtandeth, there is none that "ſeeketh after God." Mind, here is no exception, the prophet knew not one; neither did the apoſtle---"All the Gentiles had the underſtand-"ing darkened, being alienated from the life of "God through the ignorance that is in them,

"becauſe

" becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts." To man in this ſtate of ignorance what could be ſo ſuitable as a prophet? And what prophet like him, who being God is poſſeſſed of infinite wiſdom, and being God-man has that infinite wiſdom for his peoples' uſe? He was made unto them wiſdom, that by his divine teaching he might enlighten their underſtandings, and by leading them into all truth, might make them wiſe unto ſalvation. He begins his teaching with diſcovering to them their ignorance, which is a hard leſſon to learn, but he uſes ſuch mildneſs and gentleneſs with his authority, that by degrees he ſubdues their pride and makes them willing to ſit at his feet to hear his words. This is the humble poſture of all his true diſciples. They receive him by faith for their teacher, convinced that without him they can learn nothing which belongs to their peace, and having been for ſome time under his teaching, they grow more ſenſible of their want of it. He diſcovers to them more of their ignorance, and thereby brings them to a cloſer dependence upon him for wiſdom. And that is the way they riſe in his ſchool. Whoever is the moſt humble and teachable, he is the greateſt in the kingdom of heaven. The abiding ſenſe of his ſtanding in need of the divine Prophet every moment makes him the higheſt ſcholar. And the Lord keeps him in this dependent ſtate, waiting upon him for his

continual

continual inſtruction, in hearing and reading the word, and in prayer for the enlightening Spirit to make the word effectual. The great Prophet could teach without theſe means, but he has commanded us in the uſe of them to wait upon him: for in them he has promiſed to meet and bleſs his people, and for the fulfilling of this promiſe they wait. Chriſt's preſence they look for in the uſe of all means, and they find it. He teaches them, how liable they are to err, how little they know, how ſoon they forget, and thus they grow in a dependence upon, and in love to their divine Teacher. And as all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are in him, and they can know at preſent but in part, they therefore will be waiting upon him for more, ſtill more knowledge, and he anſwers his character, he teaches them wiſdom. He ſhews them dangers, diſcovers to them the devices of ſatan, guards them againſt the errors and hereſies of the day, makes manifeſt the ſnares of the world, and in all reſpects fulfills to them the office of an infallible prophet: for he keeps them from reſting upon any falſe foundation, and enables them to build all their hopes of aceeptanee with God upon the atonement made by the high

PRIEST of our profeſſion Chriſt Jeſus. This is his chief offiee. He is our Prophet to teaeh us our guilty helpleſs ſtate, and to bring us to rely

rely upon him to ſave us from it, by being our Prieſt. All we have ſinned, and have incurred the pains and penalties due to ſin. We are all juſtly liable to the ſufferings and death, to the curſe and to the ſeparation from God, threatened in his law to tranſgreſſors, and we have no means in our own power to eſcape them. How full then of grace and love was the heart of our bleſſed Immanuel, that he would vouchſafe to be a prieſt to offer gifts and ſacrifices for ſin? His gifts were infinitely precious---he gave himſelf for us, the gift of his eternal God-head, the gift of his immaculate manhood, body and ſoul, in which he obeyed perfectly, and ſo magnified the law, that it may be eternally honourable in admitting thoſe, who have ſinned, into heaven---the gift of his prevailing prayer for all that ſhall believe in him to the end of the world---and the gift of his body and ſoul to be once offered for ſin, in the place and in the ſtead of ſinners, as it is written, " He ſuffered once " for ſins the juſt for the unjuſt that he might " bring us unto God---He died for our ſins ac- " cording to the ſcriptures---He was made a " curſe for us, that he might redeem us from the " curſe of the law, and that we who ſometimes " were afar off might be made nigh by his blood, " and might through him have acceſs by one " Spirit unto the Father." In theſe moſt precious gifts, in this everlaſtingly meritorious Sacri-

fice conſiſts the office of our divine prieſt; and upon him the believer reſts. He is enabled upon this foundation to build all his hopes of acceptance. The great atonement made by Jeſus's obedience unto death is all his ſalvation, and all his deſire---all his ſalvation: for he looks no where elſe, but to Jeſus and him crucified: he depends upon nothing elſe to ſave him from ſuffering and death, from the curſe of the law, and from being eternally ſeparated from God. And this is all his deſire---to get a cloſer acquaintance, and more intimate communion with the crucified Jeſus. This is his one ſtudy and delight---I have determined, ſays he, to know nothing but Jeſus, by whom I have now received the atonement. God forbid that I ſhould glory, except in the croſs of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I would look upon all other things as droſs and dung, compared to the excellency of the knowledge of that one offering, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified. In this his prieſtly office, bleeding and dying for me, he is beyond deſcription, beyond conception, full of grace and truth; and daily he becomes more lovely in mine eyes. As I diſcover more of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of my heart and life, my meritorious Prieſt grows more dear to me: I reſt more ſafely on his atonement, ſatisfied of its infinite ſufficiency to bring me near to God. And finding my faith and hopes eſtabliſhed in it, and

through

through it a free acceſs to the Father, Jeſus the ſacrificed Lamb of God becomes day by day more precious to my heart. His blood and righteouſneſs are the continual rejoicing of my ſoul. Oh! how happy am I in this my royal Prieſt: for now, even now have I redemption in his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins---I am ſafe from the deſtroying angel under the blood of ſprinkling, and I have alſo boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus. Daily do I experience more of the riches of his grace, comforting, ſtrengthening, and ſanctifying me thro' faith in his moſt precious blood. Through this he ſaves me from hell, through this he beſtows upon me heaven, and for this ſhall be my ſong of everlaſting praiſe. Unto him who hath thus exceedingly loved me, and hath waſhed me from my ſins in his own blood, and hath made me, the vileſt of ſinners, a king and a prieſt (amazing grace) unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Theſe are the breathings of the believing ſoul, now become well-grounded upon the atonement, and living upon the prieſtly office of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for peace and joy, and expecting to be eſtabliſhed in them continually by his power, which makes another of his offices neceſſary: for ſome corruption or enemy, temptation or trouble, will be always trying to draw the eye of faith from looking unto Jeſus the High Prieſt

of

of our profeſſion; and ſuch is the believer's helpleſſneſs, that he could not be fixed a moment, was not Jeſus a prieſt upon his throne, almighty to make all his enemies his footſtool, and to rule in and over his people as their

KING. In this relation he exceedingly endears himſelf to them: for they are in themſelves weak and helpleſs. They are without ſtrength to reſiſt the leaſt temptation, or to overcome the weakeſt enemy. They cannot of themſelves ſubdue one corruption, or get the victory over a ſingle luſt. Neither can they perform one act of ſpiritual life. They cannot make nor keep themſelves alive to God by any power of their own: for without Chriſt they can do nothing. Moſt mercifully then is his kingly office ſuited to their weakneſs. He is the great king over all the earth, as God; but he has a peculiar rule in and over believers as God-man, the Head of the body the church; to which he is connected by as cloſe and near a bond, as the members of the body are with the head. He is the firſt in dignity, as the head is, and in all things has the pre-eminence; and what the natural head is to its members, the ſame he is to the members of his ſpiritual body: for he is the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nouriſhment miniſtered, and knit together, increaſeth with the increaſe of God. And for the miniſtering

niſtering of proper nouriſhment and influence to his members, he has all power in heaven and earth in his hand. He is the Lord God omnipotent, whoſe kingdom ruleth over all. It is not an outward thing, like the kingdoms of the world; but, ſays he, the kingdom of God is within you. He ſets it up within, in the hearts of his people, and there he ſways the ſceptre of his grace, ſubduing all the evils within, and conquering all the enemies without, by his almighty arm. He takes them and theirs under his royal protection, and manages all their matters for them, until he bring them by his power, unto eternal ſalvation. The power is his; but by faith it becomes theirs. When they find themſelves helpleſs and without ſtrength, then they look up to him to make them ſtrong in the Lord, and by faith reſt upon his promiſed ſtrength, and thereby receive whatever degree of it is needful at that time. Thus they live by faith upon their almighty King, and they glorify him by truſting in him for ſtrength. By daily experience they become more ſenſible of their weakneſs, and learn to live more out of themſelves upon him. They find the ſafety, the comfort of this. They ſee it is far better for them to be dependent upon Chriſt, that his power may reſt upon them, than that they ſhould be ſtrong in themſelves: and therefore they rejoice, they take pleaſure in

in their own weakneſs, becauſe it illuſtrates and magnifies the power of Chriſt, who does all for them, and in them.

Hear one of theſe happy believers thus deſcribing his caſe: I was caught up, ſays he, into the third heavens, into paradiſe, and I heard there unſpeakable words, which it is not poſſible for a man to utter: and leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure, thro' the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the fleſh, the meſſenger of ſatan to buffet me, leſt I ſhould be exalted above meaſure; for this thing I beſought the Lord thrice, that he would take it away from me. And he ſaid unto me; My grace is ſufficient for thee---My grace is ſufficient to ſanctify this croſs, and to ſupport thee under it; it will be for my glory and for thy good it ſhould be continued: becauſe my ſtrength is made perfect in weakneſs---The weaker thou art, the more will my ſtrength be magnified in bearing thee up, until faith and patience have their perfect work. This divine anſwer from my Lord and King ſatisfied me, and I have for fourteen years had ſweet experience of the truth of it. I am a witneſs to the all-ſufficiency of Jeſus's grace; but never have I found ſo much of it, as when I have been the moſt helpleſs in myſelf; and therefore moſt gladly will I glory in my infirmities and weakneſſes, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me, that his power may be

continually glorified by my continually depending upon him for it; and that I may have freſh evidence of Chriſt's power working mightily in me. Since the Lord is thus become my ſtrength, I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake, in whatever I ſuffer for him and his cauſe: for when I am weak then am I ſtrong,---weak in myſelf, ſtrong in the Lord; ſtronger in him the more ſenſible I am of my own weakneſs, and then ſtrongeſt of all, when finding I can do nothing, I live by faith upon him to do all for me. In this ſtate of weakneſs and dependence I glory, I take perfect pleaſure in it; becauſe it honours the kingly office of my Lord Chriſt, and makes it plain to myſelf and others, that he keeps me every moment by his mighty power: for ſince I can do nothing, the excellency of the power which does all in me and by me, appears evidently to be of God, and not of man.

Reader, is not this an happy caſe? Is not that man bleſſed whoſe ſtrength is in the Lord, and who can ſay in faith, Surely in the Lord have I ſtrength? And what hinders thee from being as ſtrong in the Lord as Paul was? Thou haſt the ſame promiſes, the ſame God and Saviour to fulfil them; and, for thy greater encouragement to live upon him by faith, for the fulfilling of them to thee, he has another office, in which he condeſcends to be thy

ADVOCATE,

ADVOCATE, freely to take thy cauſe in hand, and to ſee it carried in the court of heaven. In this character he would repreſent himſelf, as having undertaken to anſwer all charges againſt thee from whatever quarter they come, and to obtain for thee every bleſſing promiſed in his word, and for which thou applieſt to him by faith in the time of need. In this amiable light he would have thee to conſider him as thy dayſman, to whom, being thy Saviour and thy Friend, thou mayeſt ſafely refer thy cauſe, as the Mediator between God and man, who will tranſact all thy matters for thee with the Father, and as thy Interceſſor, who appears in the preſence of God for thee, that every bleſſing of his ſalvation may be thine. Under theſe names the ſcripture deſcribes the advocateſhip of the Lord Chriſt, which office he ſuſtains for thy ſake, to encourage thee to come with boldneſs to the throne of his grace. Thou haſt a friend there, who is bound by his word, and alſo by his office, to ſee that thou want no manner of thing which is good; and although all things ſeem to make againſt thee, and thou canſt find no human means of obtaining the promiſed good, which thou wanteſt, then look up to the Lord Jeſus. Thou wilt glorify him at ſuch a time, if thou canſt truſt in his interceſſion, and if the workings of thy faith be ſuch as theſe---

Although I am leſs than the leaſt of God's mercies, a vile ſinner, and to this moment an unprofitable ſervant, deſerving for my very beſt works and duties to be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction from the preſence of the Lord; yet glory be to his infinite grace, I have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for my ſins. All the bleſſings which he has promiſed to give his dear people, as their Saviour, their Prophet, Prieſt, and King, he is my Advocate with the Father to obtain for me.---A righteous Advocate, who aſks nothing but what he has a right to, and who never aſks in vain. It hath pleaſed the Father, that all fulneſs ſhould dwell in the Head of the body, the church, and it pleaſeth him that the members ſhould, from the fulneſs of their Head, receive abundantly all the influence they want: for the Father himſelf loveth them, and out of his infinite love gave his Son to be their head, that he might fill all in all of them. What then may not I expect from ſuch an Advocate with ſuch a Father? Already have I received ſo much that I know Jeſus appears in the preſence of God for me. I can truſt my cauſe in his hands He has taught me to leave all my matters to his management, and I deſire more ſimply to reſign them up to him. I find every thing goes on well which is left to his direction, and nothing miſcarries but what I undertake

without him. Oh for more faith? The Lord increaſe it, that my precious Advocate may be more glorified by my truſting him more, and that he may have all the honour of conducting my affairs, ſpiritual and temporal, in earth and heaven, in time and in eternity: Even ſo be it, Lord Jeſus.

After the believer has been taught thus to truſt the Lord Chriſt, and to expect that grace which in his ſeveral offices he is engaged to give, then his converſation will be well ordered: and as he daily grows in faith and dependence upon Chriſt, he will walk more in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt: his outward as well as inward matters, will come under the influence of grace, and will be left to the direction and government of the Lord Jeſus, which is another excellency of the life of faith, and which renders it infinitely preferable to any other way of living.

The ſtate of the caſe is this: Chriſt has all power in heaven and earth given unto him. As God-man he has a mediatorial kingdom, which ruleth over all created beings and things; for they ſubſiſt by the word of his power, and are upheld by his providence: ſo that whatever, in his infinite love and wiſdom, he ſees beſt for his people, he is almighty to beſtow it on them. They can want no promiſed good, nor ſuffer any outward evil; but he is able to give the one, and

and to deliver from the other. Their wants are many, their ſufferings great. Sin has brought diſorder upon the whole creation. The outward ſtate of man in the world is full of miſery, not only following him, but alſo in him, in his very frame and conſtitution.---Pain, ſickneſs, mortality in his body, emptineſs in his enjoyments, diſappointments, loſſes, worldly cares, ſomething or other in body or eſtate troubling him; for man is born to trouble. What manner of love then is this, that God our Saviour would take theſe things under his government, and manage them for the good of his people, whom he would have to be happy in him in this world, as well as in the next. He has given them many great and precious promiſes relating to the life that now is, and he is faithful who hath promiſed to ſupply their earthly wants, to ſanctify their ſufferings, and to make all things work together under him for their good. He has kindly undertaken their temporal, as well as their ſpiritual concerns; for nothing was left out of the covenant of grace. It was ordered in ALL things. The outward ſtate and condition of believers, their poverty or riches, health or ſickneſs, trials of every kind, how great they ſhould be, how long they ſhould continue, are all appointed, and unalterably fixed; nothing left for chance to do. When the Lord God determined to bring many ſons unto glory through Chriſt Jeſus,

the means by which he intended to bring them unto that end, were in his purpoſe, as well as the end itſelf: therefore all things were ordered and made ſure, even to the very hairs of their head; for they are all numbered. What a continual ſource of comfort is this to believers? Their preſent happineſs is provided for as well as their eternal, in the covenant of grace. God is become their God, has made himſelf known to them in this covenant-relation, and has thereby bound himſelf to give whatever he ſees will be the beſt for them. But becauſe he knoweth their frame, and how apt they are, under hard and long trials of faith, to be diſcouraged, he has therefore made them many ſweet temporal promiſes for their ſupport. Leſt they ſhould be weary and faint in their minds, he has engaged to deliver them from all evil, "Many are the "afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord de- "livereth him out of them all," *Pſalm* xxxiv. 19. He delivers two ways, either by entirely removing the affliction, or by changing its nature; for he takes the curſe out of it, and turns it into a real bleſſing, he makes it the means of increaſing faith and patience, ſweetens it with a ſenſe of his preſence, and demonſtrates that it comes from love, by its increaſing love to him in the heart of the righteous. This is the beſt deliverance, as one of the greateſt ſufferers for Chriſt witneſſes, who, upon the mention of his afflictions,

afflictions, declares: "Out of them all the Lord "delivered me," by ſaving me from the evil that was in them, and by making them yield the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs.

The Lord has alſo engaged to beſtow upon believers all good: "They that ſeek the Lord "ſhall not want any good thing," *Pſal.* xxxiv. 10. Their loving Shepherd will ſee that they lack nothing, no good thing will he with-hold from them. To the ſame purpoſe are the promiſes in the New-Teſtament, *Matt.* vi. 33. Seek ye firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things, food and raiment, and all neceſſaries, ſhall be added unto you. I your God and Saviour give you my word for it; truſt me, and you ſhall never want. With confidence did he believe it, who ſaid to the Phillippians, iv. 19. "My God ſhall ſupply ALL your need, "according to his riches in glory by Chriſt "Jeſus." What a powerful motive is here for the ſtrengthening of our faith, that be our wants ever ſo many, ever ſo great, our God has engaged to ſupply them all! We may boldly then caſt all our care upon him, ſince he careth for us, and may reſt aſſured of his managing our whole outward eſtate, infinitely better than we could for ourſelves. What trouble, what burdens ſhall we be hereby eaſed of! What peace of mind ſhall we enjoy, when we can give up all our temporal concerns into the Lord's hands, and

and by faith ſee them all conducted for our good, by his infinite wiſdom and almighty love! Bleſſed ſurely is the man who thus putteth his truſt in the Lord his God. He is delivered from the anxious care of getting, and from the fear of loſing what he has got: he is eaſy about the preſent, the future he leaves to the Lord: his converſation is without covetouſneſs, and he is content with ſuch things as he has, and thereby he eſcapes thouſands of the common troubles of life. In this ſweet peace he enjoys his ſoul, becauſe the Lord has ſaid to him—"I will never "leave thee nor forſake thee," in any ſtate, in any want, or in any diſtreſs—I will be ever with thee to turn all things, ſeem they ever ſo afflicting, into real bleſſings. Truſting to this word, which cannot be broken, he may boldly ſay, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man ſhall do unto me: let the world perſecute me, my trade fail, poverty pinch me, ſickneſs pain me, friends leave me, and all outward comforts forſake me, nevertheleſs I am a happy man. The Lord Chriſt is my portion, my all-ſufficient portion ſtill, and theſe things, being of his appointment, are for the beſt. I find them ſo, glory be to him. He makes them the means of weaning me from the world, deadening the old man of ſin, bringing me to a more intimate acquaintance with himſelf, and to a greater experience of his goodneſs to my ſoul; whereby he enables

enables me to truſt all things for time and for eternity in his hands, who hath ſaid unto me, and faithful is he that hath ſpoken, who alſo will do it, " I will never leave thee nor forſake " thee."

But ſome may ſay, Are there any perſons who live thus above the world, freed from its cares and fears, and troubles? Yes, thanks be to God for his unſpeakable gift. He has promiſed to make all things to work together for good to them that love him, and he has had witneſſes in every age of his faithfulneſs in fulfilling his promiſes. Read that little book of martyrs, *Hebrews*, xi. and you will ſee how happy they were in God, not only in proſperity, but alſo when all the world was againſt them. Great were the triumphs of their faith. They choſe to ſuffer affliction, rather than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon; they eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt, and ſet more value upon it than upon riches and honours. And we have a great cloud of witneſſes in the New-Teſtament, who rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the name of Chriſt, who bleſſed their revilers, prayed for their perſecutors, and took joyfully the ſpoiling of their goods. Hear one of them ſpeaking the ſentiments of the reſt: " I account all things but loſs, for the excellen- " cy of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord, " for whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, " and

" and I do account them but dung, that I may " win Chriſt." Still there are ſome among us of Paul's mind. The Lord hath not left himſelf without witneſs. We have a few names, (may the Lord daily add to their number) who can truſt all their temporal affairs in the hands of Chriſt, and who find the happineſs of having them in his management. He does all things well for them: what would make them unhappy he takes upon himſelf—" caſt thy " burden on the Lord," ſays he, " and he " ſhall ſuſtain there," and he does ſuſtain the weight of it, and thereby frees them from anxious care, and gives them ſweet content. They have enough, let them have ever ſo little of outward things, becauſe they have got the Pearl of great price. Chriſt is theirs, and the Spirit of Chriſt enables them to make up all their happineſs in him, and not in the things which periſh in the uſing. Chriſt, with bread and water, is worth ten thouſand worlds. Chriſt, with pain, is better than the higheſt pleaſures of ſin. Chriſt, with all outward ſufferings, is matter of preſent, and of eternal joy. Surely theſe are the only happy people living. Reader, art thou not one of them? Art thou not a partaker of their happineſs? If thou art a believer, it is thy privilege; thy title to it is good, and thou entereſt into poſſeſſion by faith, and if it be ſo weak that thou art not ſo happy as they are, thou ſhouldeſt take

take ſhame to thyſelf for diſhonouring God thy Saviour, for robbing him of his glory before men, and for injuring thine own ſoul, by not committing all thy outward matters unto his guidance. What could he do more, than he has done, to encourage thee to leave them to him, that he might manage them for thee? He has given thee argument upon argument, promiſes in abundance, bonds which cannot be broken, immutable things, in which it is impoſſible that God ſhould lie, to convince thee that thou mayeſt ſafely truſt in him for all temporal things which he knows will be for thy good. O pray then for more faith. Beg of the Lord to enable thee to walk more by faith, and leſs by ſenſe, that thou mayeſt commit thy way entirely unto him, and he may direct all thy paths. The more thou truſteſt in him, the happier he will make thee. Therefore daily intreat him to deliver thee from taking any anxious thought for thy life, what thou ſhalt eat, or what thou ſhalt drink; or yet for thy body what thou ſhalt put on. Since he knoweth thou haſt need of all thoſe things, and has ſent thee to the fowls of the air, and to the graſs of the field, to ſee what a rich proviſion he makes for them; art thou not much better than they? Oh! pray ſtill for the increaſe of faith, that all thy worldly matters being reſigned, and given up into the hands of the Lord thy God, thou mayeſt be

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eaſed of many weights and burdens, and mayeſt run with more patience and joy the race that is ſet before thee.

As theſe fathers in Chriſt learn by daily experience, to live more upon him for the bread that periſheth, ſo do they for the bread that endureth unto everlaſting life. They attain to a fixed ſettled dependence upon Chriſt for the conducting of all things belonging to their ſtate of grace, to their comfortable walk in it, and to their finiſhing their courſe happily. They grow in the knowledge of thoſe bleſſed truths, are more grounded and better eſtabliſhed in them, and theſe being received and enjoyed by faith, do manifeſt the excellency of living by it above any other ſtate, except that of glory.

Firſt, they are pardoned and accepted in the Beloved--In him partakers of every covenant-mercy: for he was made of God unto them wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption. His whole ſalvation is theirs. And this is their ſtate of grace, into which he has brought them, and by faith put them into the preſent enjoyment of it.

This was largely treated of before, but cannot be too much inſiſted upon, both becauſe there is a growth in the knowledge of the covenant, and clearer evidence daily to be had of the believer's intereſt in it, and alſo becauſe the love and wiſdom and mercy in contriving, the power

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in executing, the grace in applying, the bleſſings of the covenant, are all infinite. The height and depth, the length and breadth of thoſe divine perfections cannot be fully comprehended. They ſurpaſs knowledge; ſo that if a believer knows a great deal of the way of ſalvation; yet there is ſtill more, far more to be known. So long as he lives he muſt be learning, waiting upon the divine Prophet for his inward teaching, and he will become more dependent upon him, the more he learns: for the wiſer he grows, the clearer views will he have of his having attained as yet but little wiſdom, which makes him preſs forward. He believes that all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge are laid up in Chriſt, and he longs for more knowledge of his gracious undertakings, of his adorable perſon, and of his full and free ſalvation. He follows on to know the Lord. He advances from one degree to another, from faith to faith, and is not ſatisfied with any diſcovery until that which is in part be done away, and he ſhall know even as alſo he is known.

The believer, being thus ſatisfied that he is in a ſafe ſtate, looks up to the Lord to keep him, and to enable him to walk comfortably in it, which is another excellency of the life of faith. All things are well ordered in the covenant for every ſtep he is to take: all treaſured up in the fulneſs of Chriſt, and by faith received out of it.

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The believer has many enemies oppoſing him in his way heaven-wards; but in Chriſt he has ſtrength ſufficient to conquer them all, and does conquer them. His worſt enemy, that gives him moſt uneaſineſs, is indwelling ſin, which is never at reſt, like the troubled ſea, always caſting up ſome of its filthy motions and corruptions; ſo that when he is in prayer, it is ever trying to amuſe and diſtract the mind with a thouſand vain and idle thoughts, to weaken faith by its carnal reaſonings and doubts, or when he is in any holy duty, it is ever preſent with him to hinder him from doing it ſo perfectly as he would. Over this enemy there is no victory but by faith. The old man of ſin defies all ſtrength, except that which is almighty, and therefore this the Lord has promiſed; and theſe believers had experience of his faithfulneſs, whoſe iniquities he had pardoned, and who declared, *Mich.* vii. 19. "He will "ſubdue our iniquities." He will do it: He is engaged by promiſe, by office, it is his glory to ſave his people from the dominion of their ſins. On him therefore they depend for continual victory, and according to their faith ſo is it done unto them. While they fight againſt ſin, relying on the ſtrength of their almighty King, they always conquer. His arm ſubdues the ſtrongeſt luſt; but if they attack the weakeſt without him, they are infallibly conquered. And this has ſo often happened to thoſe fathers that know

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him that is from the beginning, that now they never dare go down to battle, but with their eyes upon the Lord. He has taught them to depend wholly upon him for the crucifying of the old man of ſin day by day, and in the power of his might, armies of luſts are made to flee before them. The captain of their ſalvation encourages them to fight on, not only by ſubduing ſin in them; but alſo by making this the earneſt of their having in him an abſolute mortification of ſin. By faith they ſee it, and his victorious grace will never leave them until he put them into full poſſeſſion of it. Thanks be to God through Jeſus Chriſt their Lord, ere long they ſhall have perfect and everlaſting victory over the whole body and being of ſin. And

As the old man is thus crucified, ſo is the new man quickened by the power of Jeſus, received by faith, according to what is written, "The "juſt ſhall live by his faith." The juſtified perſon by his union with Chriſt is a partaker of the grace of life, and in virtue of this union he lives upon Chriſt as a member does in the body, and thereby he has communion with the Father, by the bond of the Spirit: and this ſpiritual life is begun and carried on by faith; it is a life of faith, not as if faith quickened a dead ſinner; for Chriſt is our life. But the ſenſe and comfort, and ſtrength of that life which Chriſt gives, are received by faith

faith, and theſe are according as faith is. If faith be weak, ſo are they. As it grows, ſo do they. Which diſcovers to us another wonderful excellency of the life of faith, ſince by it we now partake of a ſpiritual and eternal life: "For "he that believeth hath everlaſting life," hath it now, is already paſſed from death unto life, and he looks up to the Lord and Giver of it for every thing needful, and expects it out of his fulneſs. Hear one of theſe happy believers thus relating his caſe. I am dead to the law, ſays he, yet alive to God; I am crucified with Chriſt. and am a partaker of the merit and power of his croſs, and by faith I have in him an abſolute crucifixion of ſin; and although the old man is thus crucified, yet the new man liveth: nevertheleſs I live, yet not I—I live a ſpiritual life, yet not I as a natural man, I did not quicken myſelf; I cannot keep myſelf alive, Chriſt liveth in me, he is the Author of my life, and on him I depend for the continuance of it in time and in eternity: for the life which I now live in the fleſh, while I am in this body of ſin and death, I live by the faith of the Son of God; he is the Author, he is the Object of that faith, by which I have received life from him: by an act of ſovereign grace he quickened me from a death in treſpaſſes and ſins, and united me as a living member into his myſtical body, and I am kept alive through his living, acting, and working in me by his

Spirit; he dwelleth in my heart by faith, and the more clearly I see this, the more do I love and enjoy the Prince of life, my precious, above all expreſſion, infinitely, eternally precious Jeſus, who loved me and gave himſelf for me, that by his death I might be dead to ſin, and by his reſurrection might live to and with God for ever and ever. Thanks and praiſe be to thee without ceaſing, thou dear Lamb of God, for thy love to me the chief of ſinners. Let all thy people ſay, *Amen.*

This is the happy caſe of thoſe believers, who are like the bleſſed Paul, ſtrong in the Lord Chriſt. By his death they are dead to ſin, and becauſe he liveth they are alive to God: for they who are joined to the Lord are one ſpirit. And as their faith increaſes, they have more ſpiritual fellowſhip with Chriſt in his death and reſurrection, not only in the merit, but alſo in the efficacy of both. They grow more dependent upon the Lord's ſtrength, and he daily mortifies in them the old man of ſin, and as he grows weaker their other enemies have leſs power over them. By their luſts ſatan tempts them, the more theſe are mortified, the weaker will be his temptations. By their luſts, by the luſts of the fleſh, the luſt of the eye, and the pride of life, the world tempts them, as theſe are ſubdued, they will be more crucified to the world. Chriſt living, dwelling, and reign-

ing in them by faith, will day by day weaken the ſtrength of ſin and ſatan, and the world; and by the power of his death and reſurrection he will be conforming them more to his own image and likeneſs. He will by faith enable them to be growing up into him in all things, as long as they live. They will be going on from ſtrength to ſtrength, till ſin and death be ſwallowed up in victory.

Until that happy time come, he has appointed certain means, in the uſe of which they are to wait for the continual receiving of grace from him to deaden the old man, and for the growth of the new. And this grace they receive, not merely becauſe they uſe the means, but becauſe they uſe them in faith, expecting his preſence in, and bleſſing upon them. Believers ſet the Lord always before them, and look through the means at him: for without him they are good for nothing; but when obſerved, according to his mind and will, as acts of truſt in his promiſe, and of dependence upon his faithfulneſs, then they anſwer the end for which they were inſtituted, and become the means of ſpiritual communion with him. And thus legal duties become chriſtian privileges. One of theſe means is attendance upon public worſhip, the ground and reaſon for which is Chriſt's promiſe--"Where "two or three are gathered together in my name, "there am I in the midſt of them."--Two or

three believers make a church, when they are gathered together in the name of Chriſt's divinity. By faith they expect the fulfilling of his promiſe, and his preſence in the midſt of them; and they are then moſt ſpiritual worſhippers, when they are looking moſt unto Jeſus, and enjoying communion with him. What are their prayers but acts of faith and dependence? "Whatever ye ſhall aſk, ſays Chriſt, in my "name, believing ye ſhall receive." Which words ſhew us that prayer is nothing worth, unleſs it be preſented in Chriſt's name, and in faith relying on Chriſt's promiſe to hear and anſwer. The object of prayer is the Godhead in three perſons. The addreſs to each is in their covenant-offices, and the petitions to each ſhould be according as they ſtand related to ſinners in thoſe offices, and the communion with the divine perſons is thus expreſſed—"Through Chriſt "Jeſus we have an acceſs by one Spirit unto "the Father;" and whatever we aſk believing we receive. What is believers hearing the word? Is it not a continual dependence upon their divine Teacher to make his word ſpirit and life unto their ſouls? They expect his preſence to enable them to mix faith with what they hear, and then they grow thereby. What is their keeping the Lord's day? Is it not to expreſs their belief of his being riſen, and entered into his reſt, and of their having,

by

by believing, entered into reſt alſo, and therefore they wait upon Chriſt in the ordinances to keep them, until he bring them to his eternal ſabbath, to that reſt which remaineth for the people of God. What is their attendance upon the Lord's ſupper? Is it not the communion of the blood of Chriſt, and the communion of the body of Chriſt, a real partaking by faith of his broken body, and of his precious blood ſhedding, and of all the benefits of his paſſion? In theſe and all other ways of God's appointment, they expect Chriſt's preſence, and therefore they go to them with gladneſs of heart to meet him. He is the dear Object of their love, and he grows more lovely by every day's experience. They taſte and ſee more how gracious he is, and therefore to converſe with him in prayer, and to be in his company in the ordinances, becomes more ſweet and delightful to them. Oh! what happy moments do they therein ſpend! All the great, rich, and pleaſant things in the world are leſs than nothing compared to this joy. Communion with Chriſt is heaven begun; and by faith they enjoy it, and nothing can rob them of it but ſin; which makes them careful in their life and converſation to pleaſe their gracious Lord. They depend upon him to teach them his will, and to give them ſtrength to perform it, that they may walk before him in all well-pleaſing. Whatever is oppoſite

poſite to his will they dread, becauſe it would deprive them of their greateſt bleſſing, even communion with their beſt and boſom Friend. Sin viewed in this light, is blacker and viler than all the devils in hell. The love of Chriſt ſhews ſin in its exceeding ſinfulneſs, and faith working by love to Chriſt gains daily victory over it. He who has the love of Chriſt in his heart will be thereby ſweetly conſtrained to fight againſt, and powerfully enabled to conquer ſin, ſo that it cannot ſeparate him from his beloved Saviour, nay, it ſhall make him live in cloſer and nearer connexion. The motions of ſin within, and temptations without, to which he is continually liable, will ſhew him the neceſſity of living in a ſettled dependence upon the grace and ſtrength of the Captain of his ſalvation, who will lead him on conquering and to conquer, until he make him at laſt more than conqueror.

The ſame faith, working by love, has gained the hearts and affections of believers over to the intereſt of holineſs, and the commandments now ceaſe to be grievous. Love to Chriſt, who is perfect righteouſneſs and holineſs, cannot conſiſt with the hatred of either; nay, they are renewed after his image in both, and renewed in knowledge, that they might know his precious image, and renewed in heart, that they might love it; therefore being thus created anew in Chriſt Jeſus, they will certainly, in the inner-

man,

man, delight in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. He has ſhed his love abroad in their hearts, has won them to himſelf, and now nothing is dearer to them than that everlaſting righteouſneſs by which he juſtifies them, and that true holineſs, of which they are become partakers in him, which they evidence by a holy walk, and in which he will preſent them holy and unblameable and unrebukeable before the Father. Thus he has perfectly ſecured the intereſt of holineſs and the glory of the moſt holy God; for they are his workmanſhip, created unto good works, to love them, to do them, to walk in them as the way to the kingdom, and they live by faith upon Chriſt's ſtrength for will and power to do them, and upon his interceſſion for the acceptance of them, laying them all upon the golden altar that ſanctifieth the gifts. Thus their whole dependence is upon Chriſt. He is all, and in all of their Chriſtian walk. To him they look for every thing needful, to enable them to glorify God in their lives, and to ſhew forth the virtues of him that hath called them; on his grace they rely, that their converſation may be as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt, and that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things; and they find in him a ſufficiency of grace, yea, they can do all things, and ſuffer all things thro' Chriſt ſtrengthening them. Whatever difficulties they meet with in the way of duty, leaning upon

upon their Beloved, he carries them thro' all---Whatever temptations, I will be with thee, ſays he, in the hour of temptation, look unto me, and thou ſhalt be ſaved---Whatever enemies, Fear them not, ſays he, for I am with thee, be not diſmayed, for I am thy God, I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs---Whatever ſorrows, Your ſorrows, ſays he, ſhall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you---Whatever ſickneſs, I will ſtrengthen thee upon the bed of languiſhing, and I will make all thy bed in thy ſickneſs---Whatever poverty, I will be a ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs---Whatever perſecution, Bleſſed are ye, ſays he, who are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, I pronounce you, I will make you, bleſſed. Thus Chriſt is with them, and none of the evils or miſeries of life can ſeparate them from him. He keeps them ſafe, and carries them through all their trials by his mighty power, and they, truſting in him, find that he makes all things work together for their good. What a bleſſed life is this! Surely there is none like it: for the life of faith is glory begun. The privileges, the happineſs of it, are greater than can be deſcribed. The ſtrongeſt believers upon earth may daily know more, and may experience far more of the comfort of walking by faith, becauſe as they grow more eſtabliſhed in it, they will

will be receiving more power over ſin, and will walk nearer to God. Having but one object to look unto and to live upon for all things; here they will be quietly ſettled. What can ſo effectually keep them from being toſſed to and fro, as to have all fulneſs treaſured up for their uſe in Chriſt, and to be brought to a fixt dependence upon this fulneſs, and to live upon it for all things belonging to life and godlineſs? Hereby ſweet peace will be eſtabliſhed within, and there will be a regular walk in the outward converſation. The whole man will experience what the Lord has promiſed to his redeemed people, "I "will cauſe them to walk by the rivers of "waters in a ſtraight way, wherein they ſhall "not ſtumble." He leads them by his Spirit, and cauſes them to walk by the rivers of waters, where there are abundant ſtreams of grace continually flowing, and he guides them in a ſtrait way, that they ſhall not ſtumble or err therein; but ſhall be kept happily to the end of their courſe, and ſhall finiſh it to their everlaſting joy. And

This is another ineſtimable privilege of believers. Chriſt has engaged to keep them unto the end; and having begun a good work in them, he has promiſed never to leave it until it be finiſhed. What a ſtrengthening is this to their faith, and what a glory does it put upon the whole life of faith, that it is a life which cannot

cannot periſh? Believers have in them the immortal ſeed of eternal life. This is the crown of all: for how will this bear them up under croſſes, ſupport them in troubles, carry them on in their warfare againſt the fleſh, the devil, and the world, and make them defy all dangers, yea death itſelf, ſince they are aſſured, from the mouth of God their Saviour, that none ſhall pluck them out of his hands. They do not truſt themſelves, or have any dependence upon grace received, but they rely upon the faithfulneſs and power of Jeſus, who has given them abundant evidence, that he will water them with his grace every moment, and hold them up by his ſtrength, and they ſhall be ſafe. How confident were believers of this in the Old Teſtament? One of them who had attained this aſſurance of faith, ſays, "Surely goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow "me all the days of my life:" and he, with many others who had obtained like precious faith with him declare,--This is our God for "ever, he will be our guide even unto death:" They were ſure he would be their God, and would follow them with mercy, and guide them, and do them good in life and death. To the ſame purpoſe our Lord has promiſed believers, "My ſheep hear my voice, and I know them, "and they follow me, and I give unto them "eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, nei-"ther ſhall any pluck them out of my hand."

How

How confidently did he truſt in Chriſt for the fulfilling of this bleſſed promiſe, who ſaid, " I " am fully perſuaded that neither death nor life, " nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor " things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, " nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall be " able to ſeparate us from the love of God " which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord." Oh! ſweet words of comfort! how happy was Paul in this aſſurance of faith! It is thy privilege, believer, as well as his. Thou haſt the ſame promiſes that he had, the ſame God to fulfil them, and thy faith ought to be growing until thou be aſſured that no creature, not all the powers on earth, nor the gates of hell, can ſeparate thee from Chriſt. They may as ſoon get into heaven and cut off Chriſt's right hand, which is impoſſible, as cut off one of the members of Chriſt's myſtical body.

If thou art ready to ſay, I ſee clearly how I ſhould glorify my dear Lord, and how happy I ſhould be, if my faith was but like Paul's in this point, but I am ſo weak and liable to fall, and mine enemies ſo numerous and mighty, that I ſometimes fear I ſhall never be able to hold out unto the end. Becauſe thou art ſuch, therefore the Lord has given thee his promiſe that he will hold thee up, and thou ſhalt be ſafe. And this promiſe is part of the covenant, which is ordered in all things, and ſure. Look at that,

and

and not at thyſelf. Conſider the Meſſenger of the covenant, in whom it is all ordered, and by whom it is ſure. When thy unfaithfulneſs would diſcourage thee, think of his faithfulneſs. Let thy weakneſs remind thee of his ſtrength. If indeed he leave thee a ſingle moment thou wilt fall: but he has promiſed, I will *never* leave thee. If the number and ſtrength of thine enemies make thee fear leſt thou ſhouldeſt one day periſh by the hand of Saul, he ſays to thee, thou ſhalt be kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation. But if thou art tempted to doubt, finding thy revolting heart apt to turn from the Lord, "I will put my fear, ſays he, into thy "heart, that thou ſhalt not depart from me." Obſerve, it is his faithfulneſs and power, and not thine, which is to keep thee, and has covenanted to do it, and he has all power in heaven and earth, and he has given thee promiſe upon promiſe for the eſtabliſhment of thy faith, that thou mighteſt be certain he will love thee, and keep thee unto the end. And when he has brought thee to a certainty of it, then thy comfort will be full. Chriſt will be magnified in thee, now he has made thee one of thoſe fathers, who have known him that is from the beginning. He has taught thee ſo to know him, as to truſt him for all things, and in all times. This is his crown and glory. He has enthroned himſelf in thy heart, as thy perfect Saviour, and his kingdom

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is within thee, even righteouſneſs and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt. Now thy Calling and thy election is ſure. Thou knoweſt that he is faithful who hath promiſed to keep thee, who alſo will do it. And having this aſſurance of faith, attended with the rejoicing of hope, and being ſealed by the bleſſed Spirit to the day of redemption, ſurely thou art an happy man, thrice happy, whom the Lord has thus highly favoured. How infinitely indebted art thou to his grace! Oh! what thanks and praiſes doſt thou owe, more than thou canſt ever pay, for what he has already done for thee! And yet this is only the dawning of the perfect day. His preſent favours are only earneſts and pledges of what he will hereafter give thee. Therefore ſtill truſt in him, and he will enlighten thee more by his Word and Spirit, he will enliven, ſtrengthen, and eſtabliſh thee more. Thy faith will daily reſt more aſſuredly upon him, the joy of thy hope will encreaſe, thy love will yet more abound. He will guide thee by his counſel in an even courſe, and will receive thee into glory.

Thus have I treated, as I was able, of the ſafety and happineſs of living by faith upon the Son of God, and have deſcribed the common hinderances which ſtop its growth, and the victory over them, which the Lord gives his people. I have been forced to be very ſhort, and could only throw out ſome hints upon this copious ſubject.

ject. May the good Lord pardon what is amiſs, and bleſs abundantly what is according to his mind and will. If thou haſt followed me, reader, in thy experience, and art indeed a happy believer, living upon thy bleſſed Jeſus, for his promiſed heaven; and for all things promiſed to thee in the way thither, think what a debt thou oweſt him! how dear and precious ſhould he be to thy heart? He has ſaved thee from all evil, he will bleſs thee with all good. As ſurely as thou haſt the earneſt, thou ſhalt have the purchaſed poſſeſſion. Oh! what a Saviour is this! he has already beſtowed upon thee the exceeding riches of his grace, but how great will be the riches of the glory, which he will give thee? Thou wilt ſoon ſee him as he is, and then thou ſhalt be like him. No tongue can tell how great that glory will be, not all the tongues in heaven, after the number of the elect ſhall be perfected, no not after they have enjoyed it for millions of ages: never, never will they be able to ſhew forth all his praiſe for making them like himſelf. Surely then, while thou art waiting for this glory, which ſhall be revealed, thou wilt be going on from faith to faith, that thy beloved Saviour may become more dear to thee; and that thou mayeſt have more cloſe and intimate communion with him. Every day's experience ſhould bring thee to love his appearing more. Having taſted how gracious he is, thou ſhouldeſt be longing for the marriage

marriage ſupper of the Lamb with fervent deſire. And being now a father in Chriſt, and ſtrong in faith, thou wilt be often looking up to him, and ſaying,

Make haſte, my beloved, and take me to thyſelf---let me ſee thee face to face, and enjoy thee, thou deareſt Jeſus, whom my ſoul longeth after. It is good to live upon thee by faith, but to live with thee is beſt of all. I have found one day in thy courts, converſing ſweetly with thee, better than a thouſand, but this has only whetted my appetite: the more communion I have with thee, I hunger and thirſt ſtill for more. My ſoul panteth for nearer, ſtill nearer communion with thee. When ſhall I come to appear before the preſence of God? O thou Light of my life, thou Joy of my heart, thou knoweſt how I wiſh for the end of my faith, when I ſhall no longer ſee through a glaſs darkly, but with open face behold the glory of my Lord. Thou haſt ſo endeared thyſelf to me, thou precious Immanuel, by ten thouſand thouſand kindneſſes, that I cannot be entirely ſatisfied, until I have the full viſion and complete enjoyment of thyſelf. The day of our eſpouſals has been a bleſſed time. O for the marriage of the Lamb, when I ſhall be preſented as a chaſte virgin to my heavenly Bridegroom! How can I but long earneſtly for this full enjoyment of thy everlaſting love!

Come,

Come, Lord Jeſus, let me ſee thee as thou art. Come, and make me like unto thee. I do love thee, I am now happy in thy love, but not ſo as I hope to be. I am often interrupted here, and never love thee ſo much as I deſire; but theſe bleſſed ſpirits ſtanding now round thy throne are perfected in love. Oh! that I was once admitted to ſee as they do, the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt! Is not that the voice of my Beloved, which I hear anſwering, *Surely I come quickly!* Amen, ſay I, even ſo come, Lord Jeſus. Make haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of ſpices.

Are not theſe, believer, the breathings of thy ſoul? Since the time for them is ſhort, may they grow warmer, and more affectionate every day! Thou wilt wait but a little while before thou ſhalt ſee the King in his perfect beauty, and thou ſhalt be a bleſſed partaker of his eternal glory. And if he make theſe few lines any means of bringing thee to ſee more of his beauty at preſent, to live more upon his fulneſs, and to be happier in him; I hope thou and I ſhall, thro' his grace, meet him ſoon, and give him to eternity the glory of this and of all his other mercies. To the Lord I commend thee, on whom thou haſt believed. May he ſtrengthen and eſtabliſh thy faith daily, that it may grow

exceedingly until he bring thee to the end of it, and admit thee into that innumerable company, who are aſcribing bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, to Him that was ſlain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood; to whom, with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Perſons in one Jehovah, be equal and everlaſting praiſe. *Amen.*

A

TREATISE

UPON THE

WALK OF FAITH.

PART I.

Walk humbly with THY God. Micah vi. 8.

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THE

PREFACE.

EVER ſince the *Life of Faith* was publiſhed, I have been attending to the doctrines therein advanced, and bringing them into experience. Their truth has appeared to me from the word of God, and has been confirmed by their being accompanied with the power of God. His divine influence attends his own doctrines to this day, and they have the promiſed effect upon the heart and life of the believer. They are mighty through God for all the purpoſes of ſalvation. What is ſaid upon the ſubject in theſe volumes is chiefly in this experimental way. My deſign is to bring the great and leading points of our religion into uſe and practice,

tice, and to ſhow how neceſſary the doctrines of grace are for the well governing of the Chriſtian walk. Every thing needful is promiſed, and by faith is received, which can make it even and regular, holy and happy.

The apoſtle Paul complained of profeſſors, who walked not according to the goſpel. There has been occaſion for the ſame complaint ever ſince; but never more than at preſent. Many walk at this day, who make ſome profeſſion of Chriſt, and yet never attain to any ſtedfaſtneſs, but are toſſed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and at laſt come to nothing.

Others pretending to be better ſettled attain to ſome form of godlineſs, but are without the life and power of it; they appear to have ſome notions and opinions about the way of righteouſneſs, but not being taught them of God, nor ever brought under the mighty influence of them, their walk is therefore very uneven and irregular, and generally in the end brings great ſcandal upon the name and cauſe of Chriſt.

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We have alſo many at this day, who ſet out in the ways of religion, but never felt the ruin of the fall, nor the plague of their own hearts: theſe are commonly very confident and preſumptuous; they make a ſhining profeſſion, and go on with great parade, until they come to be tried, and then in the time of temptation they fall away.

There are others who are the real children of God, and yet do not walk as becometh their high rank and dignity. An even, holy, happy walk with their reconciled God and Father is their privilege, and there is grace ſufficient promiſed in Jeſus, and to be received by his Spirit, to enable them to live up to it, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleaſing. Yea, the apoſtles call upon them and encourage them to be going on and advancing in the right way—"Furthermore then we beſeech you and exhort you, brethren, by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to pleaſe God, ſo ye would abound more and more," 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 1. How few follow this

this evangelical exhortation? How very few attain and preſerve in their conſciences the ſenſe of God's being perfectly at peace with them? It ought to rule there always and by all means: but for want of it, they afford continual occaſion for a legal and unbelieving ſpirit to rob them of their peace, and thereby to diſtreſs them in their hearts. As guilt comes in, love goes out. What weakens the cauſe muſt alſo weaken the effect. Love, with its fruits, muſt decreaſe in proportion as the believer with-draws his heart dependence from God. Then he begins to walk uneven and uncomfortable, he grows cold and indifferent about ſpiritual things, he gets into darkneſs and diſcontent, he becomes quite unhappy in his frame, and unthankful in his affections: whatever was the cauſe of his falling into this decay, it began at the root. His faith was attacked, and gave way. As this yielded, the decay became general, and it was found true, " If ye will walk contrary " unto me, ſaith God, then will I alſo walk " contrary unto you.

Reader,

Reader, if thou haſt the faith of God's elect, thou knoweſt that theſe things are true. Thou findeſt it hard work to maintain peace with God: and if this be not maintained, if the foundation give way, the building will certainly totter. Look well then to the ground work. Is all ſafe there? Doſt thou ſee the infinite glory of the Saviour's work, when he made peace by the blood of the croſs, and does this ſilence guilt in thy conſcience? Canſt thou at all times draw nigh in love to a reconciled God? Does not the ſenſe of thy failings and remaining corruptions keep thee at a diſtance from him, and render thy walk uncomfortable? eſpecially when without are fightings, within are fears. If it be very difficult under ſuch trials to preſerve a ſenſe of God's loving kindneſs, yet it ſhould be remembered, there is a gracious proviſion made for the eſtabliſhing of the ſoul ſo ſafely in Jeſus Chriſt, that the peace of God may rule in it always, and by all means. Is it not neceſſary then to enquire, what this proviſion is? how it may be received? and how it may be made uſe of? For if by daily practice

tice it may be experienced in its divine power, it will then have the ſame happy effect, which it had upon David; "I "will run the way of thy command-"ments, when thou haſt ſet my heart "at liberty." May thine heart, reader, and mine, enjoy more of the liberty of the children of God, and then we ſhall not only go forward, but alſo run faſt, and may nothing ſtop us from preſſing toward the mark, till we win the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.

This has been my conſtant prayer during the writing of the following treatiſe. It was the fruit of reading, and meditating, and praying over thoſe ſcriptures, which ſpeak of the walk of faith, Such reflections, as uſed to occur to myſelf, I have put down; whether it was in ſearching mine own heart, or in begging the bleſſing of God upon the text then under conſideration. This ſeemed to me an eaſy method and very uſeful: becauſe the doctrine would lead to practice, and frequent and heart-ſearching meditations would tend, under the teaching of the Holy

Holy Ghoſt, to an increaſe of faith. There are ſome ſoliloquies, addreſſed to my own ſoul, and ſome exerciſes of devotion, in prayer and thankſgiving. I would have every believer to conſider, whether it be not his privilege to join me in them, and to make my words his own. If he cannot follow me in his experience after the 5th chapter; I pray God to increaſe his faith, that this book and his experience may go hand in hand; and that he may attain to holy fellowſhip with God in all duties, and to rejoice in God at all times, yea under the croſs itſelf, and to go on conquering and to conquer, till the good fight of faith be over, and he finiſh his courſe with joy.

A

TREATISE,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

Whoever walks with God, muſt be firſt acquainted with the way of peace.

IT is the conſtant uſage of ſcripture to repreſent ſpiritual things by material, and to ſpeak of the faculties and actions of the ſoul by terms borrowed from thoſe of the body. Walking is a bodily action, and conſiſts in moving and going from one place to another: hence it is applied to the ſpiritual walk. The ſoul reconciled to God and at peace with him has an appointed way, in which it is to walk, in order to enjoy the grace promiſed to them who are in Chriſt Jeſus. This is enjoyed by faith; and therefore the ſcripture calls the believer's going on in his walk with God from ſtrength to ſtrength, *The walk of faith*, "We walk by faith, ſays the apoſtle, not by "ſight."

When man fell from God he loſt his way, and had neither will nor power to return. The Old Teſtament church makes this confeſſion---" All " we, like ſheep, have gone aſtray, we have " turned EVERY ONE to his own way," *Iſa.* liii. 6.

The apoſtle Peter reminds believers of this--- " Ye were as ſheep going aſtray, but are now " returned to the Shepherd and Biſhop of your " ſouls," 1 *Pet.* ii. 25. To which agree the words of his brother Paul--," There is none " righteous, no not one, there is none that un- " derſtandeth, there is none that ſeeketh after " God, they are ALL gone out of the way, *Rom.* iii. 10, 11, 12. The whole human race, ſays the oracles of truth, is gone aſtray, ALL of them are gone out of the way; they have left the way of God, and turned every one to his own way, they are unable, like a poor loſt ſheep, the moſt unable of all creatures, to return; yea, they are unwilling alſo; for they walk not after the ſpirit, but after the fleſh---carnally minded, and in their carnal mind enmity itſelf againſt God and his ways.

It pleaſed God in the exceeding riches of his grace to reveal to thoſe wanderers the way of ſalvation. He made it known to them upon the fall, and believers from that time forward ſaw it plainly, and went on in it comfortably. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. are ſaid to have walked

with God, in the very ſame way, afterwards marked out by the written word; which was a directory to the Jews, ſhowing them how they ſhould walk in the ſteps of the faith of their father Abraham. Age after age, God raiſed up the prophets to bring his people into the King's highway, and to put them upon praying, that they might be kept in it. By the mouth of his ſervant David, he gave them this promiſe.---- "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore "will he teach ſinners in the way---the meek "will he guide in judgement, and the meek "will he teach his way." Encouraged by this warrant from the word of God, ſinners feeling their wants were led to pray, "Show me thy "ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths, lead me "in thy truth and teach me," *Pſalm* xxv. 4. It is written in the prophets---they ſhall be all taught of God---they ſhall all know me, from the leaſt of them unto the greateſt of them, ſaith the Lord. If any of his children lack wiſdom, and aſk it of God, he giveth to all his liberally, and upbraideth not. He brings them by his word and by his Holy Spirit to the knowledge of themſelves, and to the knowledge of the true God.

Divine teaching is neceſſary to make men acquainted with themſelves. They know not their ſtate, nor fear their danger, until the Holy Spirit according to his office proceed from the

Father and the Son: then he convinces them of ſin, of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of it, of the guilt thereby incurred, and of the wrath deſerved. He enlightens the underſtanding with a clear ſight of thoſe truths, and he faſtens the conviction of them upon the conſcience. Then they find, that they had been blind and ignorant, rebels in their wills, and apoſtates in their hearts from God. He makes them feel the corruption of their nature, and the error of their ways, in which, if they had gone on, they muſt inevitably have periſhed: for they were without will, and without power to return to God. When they were made to ſee it right, that they ought to return, and to repent, yet it was not their choice to come to him in the way of believing. They found they could not believe, unleſs it was given them from above. Faith is the gift of God. And cannot be received, but by the mighty operation of God. He muſt put forth his divine power, or elſe the convinced ſinner will remain utterly helpleſs and hopeleſs, ſhut up in unbelief.

Thus the Lord teaches all his children. He makes them acquainted with their fallen ſtate, and ſenſible of their guilt and of their miſery. He brings them to the right knowledge of the corruption of every faculty of ſoul and body, which are always inclined to evil, and incapable of doing any thing truly good. A corrupt tree

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can bring forth nothing but evil fruit. The judgment is enlightened to ſee this, the conſcience is awakened to feel this, and thereby the convinced ſinner is made willing to be taught the way of ſalvation. The Holy Spirit fulfils his office by teaching him the knowledge of God.

Our bleſſed Saviour declares, no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father ſave the Son, and he to whomſoever the Son will reveal him; and this he does by the Holy Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, who is therefore given to the children of God, that they may know him and believe in him, as their reconciled Father in Chriſt Jeſus. This ſaving knowledge is hid from the worldly wiſe and prudent, but is revealed unto the unlearned, whom the Holy Spirit has made ſimple and teachable people. To them he reveals the things of God. He makes them acquainted with the

Nature of the Godhead, which is one. There is one Jehovah, and there is none other. And alſo with the

Perſonality in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. Theſe three exiſt in the one Jehovah. They took thoſe names, not to deſcribe their manner of exiſting, but their manner of acting; not what they are in themſelves, but how they ſtand related to us in the œconomy of redemption: for the Eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and agreed to ſuſtain

certain covenant offices, and aſſume names, or characters, deſcriptive of their offices. Father is the title of that divine perſon, who, out of his infinite grace, gave an innumerable company of ſinners to his Son, upon condition, that he would be manifeſted in the fleſh, and would become their ſurety, to work out for them a righteouſneſs in his life, and to make an atonement for them by his death, and then he would be his father, and their father. A co-equal and co-eternal Perſon accepted the condition, and covenanted to be made man, and to live and die for the many ſons, whom he was to bring to glory; therefore he took the name of Son, Son of God, Son of man, &c. Another co-equal and co-eternal Perſon covenanted to breathe life into them, to be to them the Spirit or breath of life, that they might be regenerate from a death in treſpaſſes and ſins, and be made the children of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Chriſt, therefore he is called throughout the ſcriptures *the Spirit*, or the breath of life. He makes them acquainted with the covenant, as he has promiſed. "The ſecret of "the Lord is with them that fear him, and he "will ſhow them his covenant," *Pſalm* xxv. 14. He will open to them the nature and certainty of all covenant engagements for the eſtabliſhment and growth of their faith. *The covenant was ordered in all things and ſure:* it was ORDERED by

by the counſel and purpoſe of the Eternal Three, concerning the heirs of promiſe, whoſe ſalvation was ſettled by two immutable things, in which it was impoſſible for God to lie, his counſel, his oath. His counſel the reſult of his infinite wiſdom, confirmed by that ſacred oath which cannot poſſibly be broken. All his perfections ſtand engaged to ſee the ſovereign decree, thus ſolemnly ratified, carried into execution; for what was *ordered* is SURE---ſure as the throne of Jehovah, unchangeable as his nature, durable as his being. Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it has been ſigned and ſealed according to law, none diſannulleth or addeth thereto. None can diſannul God's covenant, and he himſelf will not.---" My covenant will I " not break, ſays he, nor alter the thing that is " gone out of my lips." *Pſalm* lxxxix. 34. I will not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it: for I have ordered it in ALL things. I have not left one ſingle thing out, not the leaſt circumſtance: I have ſettled the whole plan by mine unerring wiſdom, and I will fulfil every tittle of it by mine almighty power. According to my will the courſe of nature and grace is infallibly directed, even the moſt minute events. Every hair is numbered. Not a ſparrow falls but by my divine decree.

How ſafely then may the heirs of promiſe depend upon a covenant God? And whenever they

they flee to Jeſus for refuge, what ſtrong conſolation may they draw from hence, that their ſalvation is fixed by the immutable counſel, and inviolable oath of the bleſſed Trinity?

The ſame divine teacher, who enabled them to believe thoſe truths for the farther eſtabliſhment of their faith, led them to diſcover the FREENESS of all covenant mercies. They are promiſed as free gifts. They are beſtowed to the praiſe of the glory of free grace. They are not conferred upon the worthy, but upon enemies, upon the ungodly, upon ſinners as ſinners. No conditions are required, no prerequiſites are expected. The motives, which determine God to ſhow mercy to ſinners, are not taken from any good in them, or foreſeen to be in them. Not for works of righteouſneſs which they have done, or can do; but according to his mercy he ſaveth them. He does all to the magnifying of the honours of his own merey. His covenant was ſo contrived, carried into execution by the life and death of Jeſus, applied by the Holy Spirit, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. No fleſh ſhall glory in his preſence. Boaſting is for ever excluded; becauſe all is of grace. Wiſdom to teach the ſinner ſaving knowledge, righteouſneſs to juſtify him, ſtrength to keep him, comforts to bleſs him, heaven to receive him, theſe are the free gifts of covenant love: for by grace is

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he ſaved through faith, and that not of himſelf, it is the gift of God; not of works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt. Thus would the Lord hide pride from man, and would teach him practically ſuch ſcriptures as this--"Not for your ſakes do I "this, ſaith the Lord, be it known unto you, "but for mine holy name's ſake," *Ezeck.* xxxvi.

Cloſely connected with this divine leſſon is the FULNESS of covenant mercies. Every thing needful for the ſalvation of the ſinner is fully, as well as freely provided by the exceeding riches of grace, and is treaſured up by the Father's love in the fulneſs of the Son. To this the Spirit bears witneſs in the word of truth, and ſeals his witneſs upon the believer's heart. It pleaſed the Father that in the Word made fleſh ſhould ALL fulneſs dwell, and that out of his fulneſs his people ſhould receive grace for grace. This is the infinite ocean. There is not a ſtream, not a drop of grace to be had, but from hence. Jeſus Chriſt, as God-man, has it all in himſelf, and for the ſame end, as the head has the ſenſes in itſelf. He has it to communicate to his members, a fulneſs of light and life, of ſenſe and underſtanding, of love and joy, yea of every ſpiritual bleſſing. On him as the head of the body, the church, every believing member, is directed to live. On him muſt he depend at all times; and to him muſt he go for all things. If he ſeek

pardon and peace, righteouſneſs and holineſs, a ſupply of his wants, ſtrength for his warfare, comforts under his miſeries, if he expect life in death, and life eternal, he muſt make continual uſe of the fulneſs of Jeſus: for in him dwelleth ALL the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily. It dwelleth in him, as in an overflowing fountain. The Father's love to his adopted children, the experience of it by the grace of the Spirit, are entirely in and from the ſalvation of Jeſus Chriſt. Out of his fulneſs comes every covenant mercy of the God-head, and in a rich abundant ſtream always flowing with ſome bleſſing or other into the believer's ſoul. The enjoyment of it on his part may not be always alike comfortable, but it is always alike ſure on God's part. Nothing can ſtop it. Nothing can turn its courſe. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. The river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it will be running on till it come back into its own ocean. The water that I will give him, ſays Jeſus, ſpeaking of the believer, ſhall be in him a fountain of water ſpringing up into everlaſting life, and bringing with it the fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for evermore.

No man will ſee any reaſon to ſet out in the way to heaven, until he be made acquainted with thoſe truths. His judgment muſt be enlightened with

with the knowledge of them. He will never think of changing his courſe, until he be made ſenſible of his own ſinful and helpleſs ſtate: and when this is brought home to his conſcience, and he has nothing in himſelf left to truſt in, then he will be led to look abroad for help. The Spirit of God will teach him the doctrines of grace, the nature of the Godhead, the perſons in the Godhead, the covenant of the divine perſons, by which every grace and bleſſing was freely and fully provided, given by the Father to the Son, in whoſe fulneſs they were all laid up for the uſe of his body the church, and communicated to every member of it through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus he is taught, that all is of grace from firſt to laſt. Whatever good a ſinner receives on earth, or enjoys in heaven, is ſo giving as to exclude all boaſting, and to lay every proud and ſelf-righteous principle in the duſt, that grace alone may wear the crown, and may have all the glory.

Here then, O my ſoul, is matter, of cloſe examination. Doſt thou know thyſelf, thy ſtate and condition, and haſt thou fled from the wrath to come? Has the light of God's word ſhone into thy underſtanding, and made thee to ſee that thou art indeed ſet out in the way to heaven? How was this diſcovered to thee? Did the Holy Spirit ever convince thee of ſin, and that thou hadſt loſt the image and forfeited the favor

favor of God? Did thou ever ſee thyſelf fallen in Adam, in him a child of wrath, a ruined miſerable ſinner? Haſt thou felt how utterly unable thou art to atone for thy ſins, or to make thyſelf holy? And waſt thou brought to this after many legal trials and ſelf-righteous efforts? At laſt forced to give up all hope in thyſelf, and to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth, from whom alone thy help could come?

And haſt thou been taught the true knowledge of the unity of the Godhead, and of the perſons in it, Father, Son and Spirit, the covenant of the ever-bleſſed Three, and the abſolute ſecurity of all covenant mercies, promiſed by the Father, and engaged to be given to the Son as the head of his body, the church, who is now actually as God-man in poſſeſſion of them, and by his Spirit he freely and fully beſtows them upon his members: for they will never ceaſe to be receiving out of his fulneſs grace for grace, until they receive out of the ſame fulneſs glory for glory.

O my ſoul, examine cloſely, and prove thyſelf by the ſtandard of the divine word. Search and try, what the conviction of thy loſt eſtate has been. Was it deep and practical? Is it an abiding truth with thee, that there is no help, or hope in thyſelf? And haſt thou fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope ſet before thee in the Lord Jeſus? Is thy knowledge of the Godhead mere theory, or is it brought

brought into practice? Doſt thou enjoy the Father's love, through faith in the finiſhed ſalvation of the Son, by the influence of the Holy Spirit? This is the ſaving knowledge of the Godhead. And is this thine? Doſt thou honour the divine perſons by acknowledging their immutable counſel, and immutable oath, entered into for the ſecurity of the heirs of promiſe, that they might truſt, and not be afraid? Doſt thou ſee with any clearneſs the abſolute ſafety of relying upon the promiſes of God, and doſt thou expect to draw from hence comfort to thy conſcience, and joy to thy heart?

If thou art indeed ſet out in the way to heaven, art thou ſettled in the knowledge of thy fallen ſtate? Haſt thou found thyſelf unable to do any thing, but to haſten on thy ruin? And from the ſight and ſenſe of this, haſt thou been led to ſee all undertaken for thee, and ſecured to thee for time and eternity, in the covenant of the ever-bleſſed Trinity. Theſe truths lie at the very foundation of all comfortable walking with God. See that thou be well grounded in them. The knowledge of thyſelf is to bring thee to God: the knowledge of God is to lead thee to walk with him. The one is to teach thee to renounce all truſt in thyſelf. The other is to ſhow thee, that thou mayeſt ſafely place the confidence of thy heart on thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy guide. Look up to him then, O my

O my ſoul, and be often praying to him, and ſaying,

O Lord God, that which I ſee not, teach thou me. Keep me an humble diſciple in the ſchool of Chriſt. Let me be daily learning there, what I am in myſelf, a fallen ſinful creature, juſtly deſerving everlaſting deſtruction from thy preſence. O let me never loſe ſight of my want of a Saviour, nor ever be without the ſenſe of what he ſaid—" Without me ye can do nothing." Teach me this, thou eternal Spirit. Open thou mine underſtanding to underſtand the ſcriptures. What thou haſt revealed in them concerning the Godhead, and concerning the counſels and works of the ever bleſſed Trinity, that reveal to my ſoul. Thou haſt declared, that no man can ſay Jeſus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghoſt: O ſhine then into my dark mind, and lead me into the ſaving knowledge of the Lord Jeſus. Make me acquainted with his covenant undertakings, and his perfect fulfilling of them, that by reſting on his finiſhed ſalvation, I may find the Father's love in the Son, his Father my Father, and may be brought, through thy bleſſed influence, to have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son. O lead me into all truth, thou Spirit of wiſdom and revelation, that I may know the things which belong to my peace, and may through thee be made wiſe unto ſalvation. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The believer is reconciled to God, and has the peace of God ruling in his conſcience, and they two walk together: becauſe they are now agreed.

IT is written in the prophets—" They ſhall be " all taught of God"—every one of his children ſhall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and what they have been taught in the underſtanding ſhall be made practical, that it may have its proper effect upon the conſcience. And this is anſwered, when it comes under the authority and power of the word of God, and faithfully accuſes or condemns according to that unerring rule.

Conſcience ſuppoſes the knowledge of ſome rule, and it conſiſts in comparing a man's ſtate or actions with that rule, in order to diſcover whether they agree with it, or not.

The rule is the ſcripture, the whole revealed will of God, which is the unerring, and the only ſtandard of right and wrong: for all ſcripture is given by the inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, to teach the man of God what is truth, and to make him wiſe in it unto ſalvation. Fallen man has no means of diſcovering the will of God, but as it is revealed to him.

He has no innate knowledge. He has no implanted principles. He is born as ignorant of God, and of the things of God, as a wild aſs's colt. His underſtanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, becauſe of the blindneſs of his heart. And he has no means in his own power of attaining any divine knowledge: for he cannot by ſearching find out God. The world by its wiſdom never did find him out. The Hottentots know as much of him as the Greeks and Romans did: indeed the natural man, let him be ever ſo wiſe, knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them; becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.

The ſcripture then is the only rule of right and wrong. Conſcience has no direction but this rule. Neither ethics, nor metaphyſics, no fancied light of dark nature, no lawleſs law of rebel nature, no human ſcience, whether pretended to be implanted, or by the uſe of reaſon to be acquired, have any right to guide the conſcience. Theſe are blind leaders of the blind. They undertake, what they are not only unfit, but what they have no warrant for. A parcel of felons in jail may think what they will of their ſtate. They may take it upon them to form a mock court, and to try one another. They may acquit or condemn, as they pleaſe: but the

the judge and the jury will pay no regard to their fooliſh proceedings. There is a word which is to try us at the laſt day, and by that we ſhould try ourſelves at preſent. It was revealed for this purpoſe. And when the revealed truth is clearly underſtood, then conſcience is acting aright, if it finds a true verdict for God, either accuſing, or elſe excuſing, according to the direction of his unerring word.

And this is the work of the Holy ſpirit. He enlightened the judgment with the knowledge of the truth, in order to make it practical; which he effects by bringing the conſcience to ſubmit to the ſovereignty of God in the law, and to ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God in the goſpel. Herein he diſplays the omnipotent power of his grace, according to the promiſe, *John*. xvi. 8. He carries with demonſtration the conviction of guilt, and the conviction of righteouſneſs, to the conſcience. By the former he gives the ſinner a real heart-felt ſenſe of his ſin and miſery, and he acknowledges himſelf a convict of the law, juſtly deſerving all its penalties in time and in eternity. By the latter he ſets open a door of hope, ſhowing him the perfect righteouſneſs of the God-man wrought out for ſuch guilty creatures as he is: he enables him to plead it before the throne, and to truſt in it for his acceptance; by which means he finds relief in his conſcience, and comfort in his heart. Being juſtified by faith he has

has peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

What the Holy Spirit teaches has life, as well as light in it. He accompanies his doctrine with the power of God. What he has revealed concerning the ſtate of mankind under the fall, he applies with divine evidence to the conſcience. Under his influence the ſinner reads thoſe ſcriptures, and feels the truth of them. "As by one "man ſin entered into the world and death by "ſin, ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all "have ſinned: through the offence of one, judg-"ment came upon all men to condemnation: for "it is written, there is none righteous, no not "one, there is none that underſtandeth, there is "none that ſeeketh after God: they are all gone "out of the way, they are together become unpro-"fitable, there is none that doeth good, no not "one. Now we know that what things ſoever "the law ſaith, it commands them who are un-"der the law, that every mouth may be ſtopped; "and all the world may become guilty before "God." His mouth is ſtopped. He has no plea to make. No excuſe left. What the law ſaith, he ſubſcribes to. The law brings him in guilty before God, and in his conſcience he bears his teſtimony to the law. He acknowledges it to be holy, juſt and good, even in its penalties, which he deſerves to ſuffer. Formerly he tried, in his own ſtrength, and took great pains to eſcape them,

them, but now he gives over all thoſe ſelf-righteous attempts. He found, that he laboured in vain to atone for his ſins, or to make himſelf holy. He groans being burdened under the ruins of the fall. His ignorance, rebellion, apoſtaſy, his corruption in every faculty of ſoul and body, render him unable to take one ſtep in his return to God. He owns it, and confeſſes, that without Chriſt he can do nothing.

O my ſoul, conſider, whether God has taught thee this knowledge of thyſelf. It is abſolutely neceſſary to reconcile thee to him, and to his ways. Thou wilt never heartily agree to walk with him by faith, ſo long as thou haſt any thing of thine own to truſt in, or to draw comfort from. Examine then; art thou ſenſible of thy fall, and doſt thou feel the ſad effects of it? Doſt thou know what it is to be alienated from the life of God? What! doſt thou find to this day the oppoſition of thy ſinful nature to the holy law, the fleſh luſting in thee againſt the ſpirit? Has God thus convinced thee of ſin? If he has, then in thy conſcience thou ſubmitteſt to what the law ſays of thy ſtate. Thy mouth is ſtopped, and thou art guilty before God. Thou haſt nothing of thine own to urge in arreſt of judgment. This is an enlightened conſcience: ſo far it ſpeaks for God, and is guided by his unerring word. O pray to the Lord the Spirit,

and beg of him to guide thee into all truth, that he may bring thy conſcience to ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Jeſus, and to be a faithful witneſs for him.

This is his proper work in the ſoul, and what he undertook in the everlaſting covenant. When he is come, ſays Chriſt, he ſhall convince the world of righteouſneſs; he ſhall teſtify of me, that I am made of God righteouſneſs to believers; and he ſhall glorify me, as Jehovah their righteouſneſs: thus he ſhall teach them my righteouſneſs, with which the father is ſatisfied, and he ſhall through faith apply it effectually to their conſciences, and they ſhall alſo be ſatisfied with it. Being juſtified by faith they ſhall have peace with God through their Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Righteouſneſs is a perfect conformity to the law: if it be tried by the balance of the ſanctuary, it is full weight; if by the ſtandard, it is full meaſure; if judgment be laid to the line and righteouſneſs to the plummet, it is quite upright. There is no defect in it of any kind. This is the righteouſneſs of the law—it muſt be perfect and continual, failing in no one point: for the unrighteous ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it is an adjudged caſe, that there is none righteous, no not one. It is left upon record, that ALL have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God; therefore by the deeds of the law,

law, there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight.

When the holy Spirit has convineed a ſinner of his being in this unrighteous ſtate, then it becomes an important inquiry—how ean the Judge of all the earth ever look upon and treat a ſinner, as if he was a righteous perſon? To which the goſpel anſwers directly—"God hath made Chriſt "to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we "might be made the righteouſneſs of God IN "him." This was agreed upon in the eovenant of the eternal Three. The Father undertook to maintain the honor and dignity of his law and juſtice. His co-equal Son undertook for his people to eome in their nature, and to ſtand in their plaee and ſtead; to act for them, and to ſuffer for them. As their ſurety, he made himſelf anſwerable for their debt of obedienee, and for their debt of ſuffering. Aeeordingly, when the great law-fulfiller eometh into the world he ſaith, LO, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD. He did it in his infinitely holy life, in which he magnified the preeepts of the law, and made them everlaſtingly honourable. He ſuffered it in his infinitely holy paſſion, bearing the ſins and ſorrows of his people, their eurſe and wrath in his body and ſoul upon the tree, until the immenſe debt being paid, he cried out in the triumph of a conquering, though a dying Jeſus, IT

IS FINISHED: for through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: he finiſhed the tranſgreſſion, and made an end of ſins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs.

This is the great leading truth of the goſpel, in which the peace of conſcience is principally concerned. The juſtly offended God is here revealed under the character of a reconciled Father. He gave his Son to be a covenant of the people; who was to fulfil all covenant engagements for them, and he has fulfilled them all. The end of his living and dying for them is anſwered. He has finiſhed the tranſgreſſion, and has made peace by the blood of his croſs. He has brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs by his divine obedience, and the Lord is well pleaſed with *him* for his righteouſneſs ſake, yea he is well pleaſed alſo with his body the church. He looks upon all the members, as he looks upon the head. He accepts them in the beloved. He beholds them in him with perfect delight, and reſts in his love. He is his Father, and their Father. He is related to his whole family in heaven and earth in the cloſeſt bonds of fatherly affection, and he makes his love known to them, and ſheds it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt. He would have all his children to addreſs him under his

his dear name—OUR FATHER *which art in heaven*, and to expect from his fatherly love all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus.

When this comfortable doctrine is received into the conſcience it ſilences guilt, and produces peace with God. The goſpel comes with full authority to eſtabliſh it in the conſcience: for it is therein revealed and propoſed to our belief under the character of a divine RECORD, made authentic and properly enrolled in the court of heaven. The witneſſes are the eternal Three. Their record is in the nature of a covenant, confirmed by their joint counſel, and ratified by their joint oath—the two immutable things, in which it is impoſſible for God to lie. He graciouſly vouchſafed to give the heirs of promiſe this perfect ſecurity for their ſalvation, that after they had fled to Jeſus for refuge, there might be an end of all ſtrife in their conſciences, and they might have ſtrong conſolation. Accordingly we read, "There are Three that bear record in "heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy "Ghoſt, and theſe Three are ONE." A record among men is an authentic teſtimony in writing, entered by authority in one of the king's courts, in order to preſerve the proceedings had upon any ſuit. This record contains the final determination of the judges in that cauſe, and is their memorial of it, and therefore imports in itſelf ſuch uncontrolable evidence, as to admit of no proof

proof to the contrary. The matter of the record is never allowed to be tried by a jury, but is of ſuch credit as not to be queſtioned in any inſtance. This is the nature of a record in law. And if we receive the witneſs of men, certainly the witneſs of God is greater; for this is the witneſs of God, which he hath witneſſed of his Son—namely—" He hath given to us eternal " life, and this life is in his Son." To which the Spirit beareth wineſs: becauſe the Spirit is truth. He has revealed the covenant of life and peace, which was between the Father and the Son, he has entered it upon record, and every word of the record may be pleaded: for it is allowed to be good and valid in the court of heaven. As a powerful advocate he pleads the perfect fulfilling of all righteouſneſs in the life and death of the God-man, and the Father's perfect acceptance of what he did and ſuffered, as the full redemption-price for all his people, and he carries his cauſe in the court of conſcience. The awakened ſinner is convinced, that the work of Jeſus is a finiſhed ſalvation, and that the divine record is a ſufficient warrant for him to believe in it. Accordingly he gives it credit, and is enabled to plead it againſt guilt and fear. Upon which he finds peace with God. Truſting to the blood of ſprinkling for pardon, and to the righteouſneſs of Jeſus for acceptance; he then ſees God reconciled to him, and that reconciles

conciles him to God, and by the Spirit of adoption he cries, Abba, Father.

But perhaps it may be ſaid, I believe this, but I do not find peace in my conſcience. Nay, but you do not believe it; if you did, it would certainly bring preſent relief: for guilt comes from the broken law, and from the apprehenſion of puniſhment deſerved; but the law has been reſtored to its dignity and made infinitely honorable by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus, how can you believe this and yet be under guilt? The puniſhment was laid upon Jeſus, and he ſuffered all that was due to his people, as their atoning ſacrifice, how can you believe this, and yet fear that juſtice will puniſh you? A debtor would not fear to be arreſted, if his ſurety had paid the ſum, and got him a full diſcharge. A felon with the king's pardon in his pocket would diſhonor it greatly, if he was to live in continual dread and terror of ſuffering for his crime. Examine carefully and pray for the right underſtanding of your caſe; and depend upon it, you will find, that either you do not believe the matter of fact, or the record concerning it.

The matter of fact is the method provided for quieting the guilty conſcience---a proviſion of exceeding rich grace and of everlaſting efficacy. The Father gave the Son to be the ſurety for his people, and to live and to die for them, and in their ſtead. The Son has finiſhed the work, which the Father

Father gave him to do, and is become the author of their eternal ſalvation.

The record of this fact is in the ſcripture. Father, Son, and Spirit, the three witneſſes in heaven, have by covenant and oath atteſted, that there is life for every one who believeth in Jeſus. "God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-"begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him "ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life."

Now conſider, of what do you doubt? has Jeſus made full atonement for ſin, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs? Has the Father demonſtrated again and again his perfect delight in his perſon, and his infinite ſatisfaction in his work. Certainly you cannot queſtion this doctrine, if you believe the ſcripture to be a divine revelation. Do you doubt then of God's free promiſe, or of his faithfulneſs to fulfil it? What! Can his word be broken? Can his promiſe fail? His word and promiſe ratified in the immutable covenant, and ſealed with the immutable oath of the eternal Three? This is your warrant to believe. And do you queſtion the veracity of it? "He, that believeth not God, hath made him a "liar." O what a dreadful ſin to give the lie to the Holy Trinity! The Father ſays, whoſoever cometh; the Son ſays, all that come unto me, ſhall be ſaved; the Spirit ſays, come, whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, and be ſaved. Are not theſe faithful ſayings worthy

of

of all credit? eſpecially as they are delivered with divine authority under the great ſeal of heaven. If doubts ſtill remain, pray againſt them, and meditate upon the unreaſonableneſs as well as the wickedneſs of them, and continue to hear and to read the word (for faith cometh, and groweth too by hearing) that you may be enabled to put honor upon it by venturing your ſoul upon the divine faithfulneſs to make it good to you.

Perhaps you may believe the record, which God hath given of his Son, but you cannot do it with ſtedfaſtneſs: you can at times ſtay your mind upon God with ſweet peace, but you are not able to maintain it: yea, you loſe it when you want it moſt. How in this caſe ſhall the believer keep the peace of God ruling always in his conſcience?

It is to be maintained in the ſame way, by which it was firſt received. It came by believing, and is thereby ſtrengthened. By the ſhedding of the blood of Jeſus Chriſt peace was made between God and man, by the ſprinkling of his blood peace is made between man and God. When this is applied to the conſcience by the Holy Spirit, and received by faith, there is a continual preſervative againſt guilt: "For the blood "of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin." Here is the witneſs of God; and it is always the ſame. This believed will always bring the ſame cleanſing virtue, and keep the conſcience purged from dead

dead works. If at any time guilt defile it, then unbelief has entered, and has been denying, either that the blood of Chriſt does cleanſe from all ſin, or that the divine teſtimony concerning it does deſerve credit. Guilt cannot eaſily enter into the conſcience but by one of theſe two ways. Examine, and ſee which it is. Do you doubt of the virtue of Chriſt's blood, or of the truth of God's record concerning it?

You reply, I dare not queſtion either of them, yet nevertheleſs I cannot with any ſettled comfort maintain peace with God. But it is your privilege to maintain it, confirmed to you by the royal charter of grace, and ratified in it by many expreſs promiſes. Jeſus has made peace by the blood of his croſs, and if you believe what the God of truth ſays of it, peace ſhould rule in your heart always: for all things are well ordered for you, and ſure in the everlaſting covenant. On the part of God all is unalterably fixed and ſettled. What is it then, which unſettles you? Is it ſomething you find in yourſelf? Is it from indwelling ſin, remaining corruption, a body of ſin and death, or from the weakneſs of your faith and of your other graces? What! have you forgotten, that from all theſe the blood of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth? Is it from a ſuſpicion, that your peace is not right, becauſe it ebbs and flows? This ſhould humble, but not diſcourage you: becauſe there is a gracious proviſion made to re-

move

move your ſuſpicion. God has taken the charge both of you and of your peace: he keeps both by his mighty power, as it is written, the peace of God which ſurpaſſeth all underſtanding ſhall keep with a ſafe guard your hearts and minds in Chriſt Jeſus. You are as ſafe in the hand of God at the loweſt ebb, as at the higheſt ſpring-tide of ſenſible comfort: becauſe your ſafeguard is almighty, and he is equally concerned about your peace, whether you feel it, or not. Your ſenſe of it may vary, but he varies not. There is in him no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning. How ſhould the belief of this ſtay your mind upon your God, and keep guilt out of the conſcience, even when you are walking in darkneſs, and have no light!

O my ſoul, meditate upon thoſe precious truths. Give thyſelf wholly to them. Conſider, how deeply they enter into the very being of thy peace. Unleſs they be underſtood, thou canſt not know the way of peace; and unleſs they be received by faith, thy conſcience will not be purged from guilt and unbelief. And while theſe defile it, thou canſt not look upon God as reconciled, or delight thyſelf in him or in his ways. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? But when they are agreed, and of one mind, then walking with God becomes pleaſant, and all his paths are peace.

Search

Search then, and examine thyſelf, O my ſoul, and that not lightly, and after the manner of diſſemblers with God, but cloſely and thoroughly by the light of the divine word, and under the teaching of the divine Spirit. Doſt thou underſtand what is revealed concerning the way of peace—what was covenanted in the counſel of the eternal Three—and what has been done in conſequence of it? Jeſus Chriſt is the great peace-maker. He has made peace through the blood of his croſs. The Father ſent him, gave him to be a covenant of the people, to fulfil for them all righteouſneſs, and to be their atoning ſacrifice. The Father has ſeen the work which he gave him to do, and has accepted it; is perfectly ſatisfied with it, and therefore is infinitely delighted with him and with all his. He would now be known by the high ſtyle and title of the GOD of PEACE. Fury is not in him to thoſe, whom he ſees in the beloved. He is a Father, fully, for ever reconciled to all his children in Chriſt Jeſus. He loves them, as he loves him, with every kind feeling of the moſt tender parent. And he will bring every one of them to partake with their glorified head of the bleſſings of his everlaſting love.

If thine underſtanding be enlightened with this knowledge of God, is it effectual in thy conſcience? Canſt thou plead it there? This is the principal

principal thing. Haſt thou a good conſcience, freed from guilt and condemnation, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son? He is well pleaſed with him for his righteouſneſs ſake. His ſoul delighted in the ſweet ſmelling ſavor of his Son's ſacrifice. Becauſe he humbled himſelf and became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, therefore the Father hath highly exalted him. This is the witneſs of God. Doſt thou yield to it, and give it full credit? What! canſt thou ſet to thy ſeal that God is true, and that what ſatisfied him has perfectly ſatisfied thee, and therefore the peace of God rules in thy conſcience always and by all means?

Remember, this is thy privilege. Thou art called to the enjoyment of it. The evidence is as full as could be deſired, for the ending of all ſtrife in thy conſcience. The greateſt honor thou canſt put upon the divine witneſſes, is ſo to end it, as to ſuffer no appeal to be made from their decree. Thy conſcience ſhould join iſſue. It ſhould ſay the ſame that God does. It ſhould plead thy diſcharge from guilt under the broad ſeal of heaven; and ſhould ſtop the mouth of unbelief with thoſe words written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace—"There is "NO condemnation to them that are in Chriſt "Jeſus---they are freely forgiven ALL treſpaſſes" ——"They are juſtified from ALL things---thy

" ſins and iniquities, ſays God himſelf, will I re-
" member NO MORE." Theſe are the immutable words of truth. They cannot be broken. O my ſoul, put honor upon them. Believe them without doubt or wavering. Why doſt thou draw back thy confidence? Truſt, and not be afraid. Thou mayeſt ſafely venture to believe all that the Lord hath ſpoken. He will make it good; and the more thou believeſt, the more will be made good. More faith will bring thee in a richer revenue of peace. The Lord increaſe thy faith. May it entirely influence thy conſcience, that it may agree with God; neither queſtioning the infinite value of the righteouſneſs and atonement of Immanuel, nor yet the faithfulneſs of his promiſe, under which thou claimeſt them—" WHO-
" SOEVER WILL may take them freely."

Let thy faith be ever ſo well eſtabliſhed, yet thou wilt meet with ſomething every day to try it; but remember, the foundation on which thou ſtandeſt, cannot fail, and none, nothing ſhall remove thee from it. The Lord brought thee to build upon this foundation. He hath begun the good work and he will not leave his work unfiniſhed. The top-ſtone ſhall certainly be brought forth with ſhouting GRACE---GRACE: for his love is like himſelf. His purpoſes, his word, his works change not. What if thou feel many things wrong in thyſelf, thou art ſometimes low in ſpirits; thou canſt not be pleaſed with thy corruption,

tion, and thou art not pleaſed with thy duties, thy graces are weak, thy love not as it ſhould be, thy beſt ſervices unprofitable; yet theſe very things rightly underſtood, and improved by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be the means of eſtabliſhing thy conſcience in the peace of God. They will lead thee every day to a greater dependence upon ſovereign grace: for they will leave thee nothing to truſt in, but the righteouſneſs and the atonement of Immanuel, nothing to keep thee, but his faithfulneſs to his word and work, and nothing to bleſs thee, but his free covenant mercy. Thus they will work together for thy good. Trials will ſettle thee. Enemies will confirm thee in peace. Troubles will bring thee nearer to God. Amidſt all diſcouragements thou wilt have this promiſe to ſtay thy ſoul upon---"I "will never leave thee, nor forſake thee." His friendſhip is fixed. It ſprings from the purpoſe and love of his own breaſt, and therefore was and is always unchangeably the ſame in him. Whom he loveth he loveth unto the end.

Well then, O my ſoul, thou haſt examined thyſelf. How is it with thee? Doſt thou know the way of peace? Art thou at peace with God, being juſtified by faith? Canſt thou plead this peace, and maintain it in thy conſcience? Is it a good conſcience, does it witneſs for God? Is it a pure conſcience, cleanſed from guilt and condemnation? Is it ſatisfied, that the Father is perfectly

fectly reconciled through the life and death of his Son? And is it satisfied with the divine record, giving thee a free grant of the benefits of his life and death, and putting thee into possession by believing? Art thou of one heart and of one mind in this matter with the Father, and now being at peace with him agreed to walk in his way? If indeed he has been thus gracious unto thee, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise him for the exceeding riches of his love. What a mercy is it, that he has brought thee into the way of peace! O go on: fear not. Set out daily with an holy humble boldness to walk with thy God. And for the guiding of thy feet in his way, and that thy steps may not decline from it, be diligent in hearing and reading the word of God. Study it. Pray over it. Mind what encouragement it gives thee: "Having "therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the "holiest by the blood of Jesus, by that new and "living way, which he hath consecrated for us, "through the vail, that is to say, his flesh, and "having an high-priest over the house of God, "let us draw near with a true heart, in full assu-"rance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled "from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed "with pure water." *Heb.* x. 19, 20, &c. What perfect peace is here proclaimed to the children of God! Sin had separated them from him, but there is access through Jesus. He is the way to the

Father. He is a new way, in oppoſition to the old way of works, which upon the fall was ſhut for ever. He is a living way, all that are alive to God live by the faith of the Son of God. He is a conſecrated way, every thing needful for their holy walk being provided in him. And they are required to walk in this way with boldneſs; truſting to the blood of Jeſus, and depending on the interceſſion of the high-prieſt over the houſe of God, they have acceſs with confidence into the holieſt. It is their undoubted privilege to draw near with a true heart, not like a double-minded man, wavering and unſtable; but with full aſſurance of faith, entirely ſatisfied that God in Chriſt has nothing in his breaſt, but love towards them; therefore they ſhould believe in him, and ſerve him without fear, having their hearts ſprinkled from an evil conſcience, maintaining peace with God through the continual application of the blood of Jeſus, and having their bodies waſhed with pure water, body and ſoul being cleanſed from the guilt and filth of ſin by the waſhing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.

O may this be my happy experience. May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conſcience. Yea, Lord, this is my heart's deſire. I would walk with thee day by day in perfect peace. O deny me not the requeſt of my lips. Glory be to thy

free love, that through Jeſus I am ſuffered to have acceſs into thy preſence, and am commanded to come with boldneſs into the holieſt of all. Lo, I come before thee, holy Father, to plead the blood-ſhedding and the righteouſneſs of thy dear Son; and I hope my plea will be admitted, through the interceſſion of the high-prieſt of the houſe of God. O look, thou God of peace, upon the face of thy Beloved. See me in him. I deſire to be found in him. And for his ſake let the faithful witneſs for thy love in Jeſus abide with me, that in hearing and reading thy word, in prayer and meditation he may increaſe my faith in thee and love to thee.

O God the Holy Ghoſt, I beſeech thee to make practical upon my heart what thou haſt revealed in ſcripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation by the ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus. Apply it effectually. Apply it continually. Help me to believe with more comfort in my conſcience, and with more ſtedfaſtneſs in my walk, that his blood cleanſeth from all ſin. O bleſſed Spirit, carry on thy work in my ſoul. Lead me from faith to faith, that I may at all times have freedom to enter within the vale to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with him againſt doubts and fears, againſt corruptions and enemies. O teach me to draw near to him with a true heart, ſtedfaſtly perſuaded of his love, and

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in full assurance of faith. This is thy gracious office: O fulfil it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me, for Jesus's sake; to whom, with thee O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Persons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

The believer in his heart cleaves to God, and walks with him in love.

THIS depends entirely upon a Good conſcience. There can be no love of God, unleſs there be firſt peace with God. No convinced ſinner can love him, until he believes him to be reconciled. While guilt remains in the conſcience, enmity will keep its place in the heart: for ſo long as he looks upon his ſins unpardoned, and God the juſt avenger of them, he muſt conſider him as a jealous God, and a conſuming fire. In this view there is every thing that can increaſe his guilty fears. And while theſe defile the conſcience, inſtead of walking with God, he would run away from him, and like the firſt offenders, he would fooliſhly try to hide himſelf from the preſence of God.

But when the Holy Spirit has diſcovered the way of peace, and has enabled the ſinner to find peace, being pardoned and juſtified through faith in Chriſt Jeſus, then he looks upon God in another light. He can view him, according as he has proclaimed himſelf--the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth, keeping mercy

for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and Sin. Under this endearing character the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is revealed in ſcripture. Thus would he be conſidered in the covenant of grace--related in the neareſt bond of affection to all his children. He is their father, the father of mercies, freely loving, freely forgiving, freely accepting them in the beloved. The holy Spirit convinces them of it, and ſheds the Father's love to them abroad in their hearts; the ſenſe of which ſweetly inclines them to love him again. Love begets love. God has put on the tender bowels of an ever-loving parent, and he gives them the affection of dutiful children. They love him, becauſe he firſt loved them. Then it is the delight of their ſouls to cultivate and improve this love on their part, and it becomes their heaven upon earth to walk with their God in the ways wherein he has appointed to meet them, to love them, and to bleſs them.

The main point then in the chriſtian walk is to know how to maintain peace in the conſcience: becauſe this is the powerful motive upon which the believer firſt ſets out, and it is the great ſpring which keeps him going on. While his conſcience continues pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well. He does not ſtop, he does not halt, in the way. But when guilt enters, unbelief certainly follows

lows close after it, and then there is a fresh controversy in the court of conscience. Many doubts arise, and afford matter for strife and debate. The sense of peace is not only disturbed, but is also for a time destroyed by such suspicions as these--" Am I freely pardoned--Is God fully reconciled to me--Is he still my loving Father? " I fear not. I have done so and so--He is cer- " tainly displeased with me, and therefore I " dare not approach him, as I used to do, with " love and confidence." This is an evil conscience. It is not purged from dead works: because guilt is still in it, and this keeps the soul at a distance from God. It begets a coldness and a shyness to him, and by shutting out the comfortable sense of his love makes way for fear of wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence, and an evil heart of unbelief tempts the man to depart from the living God.

Look well then, O my soul, to this leading truth, which has such universal influence over the Christian walk. Attend to the peace of thy conscience. See it be true peace, and mind it be well settled. Learn to maintain it upon gospel-motives. The heart follows the determination of conscience; and cleaves to the Lord, or departs from him, according as the conscience excuses or accuses. It is therefore absolutely necessary for our peace, that we should know how God has shewn himself reconciled in Christ Jesus. This

character

character of him in the ſcriptures ſhould be ſtudied. Whoever has been enabled to call him Abba, Father, ſhould implore the aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit for an increaſe of faith, and ſhould make uſe of all appointed means for his growth in the knowledge of the love of his heavenly Father. The apoſtle is upon this ſubject in *Romans* v.--a chapter abounding with powerful arguments to eſtabliſh the peace of God in the conſcience; in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a juſtified man. He has peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt--by whom he has a free acceſs to God--is in a ſtate of grace--ſtands in it by the power of God--has reaſon to rejoice (come what will) in hope of the glory to be revealed--and whatever he meets with in the way to glory, ſhould increaſe the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Obſerve how divinely the apoſtle ſpeaks: "Therefore being juſtified by "faith we have peace with God through our "Lord Jeſus Chriſt: by whom alſo we have "acceſs by faith into this grace wherein we "ſtand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God; "and not only ſo, but we rejoice in tribulations "alſo, knowing well that tribulation worketh "patience, and patience experience, and ex-"perience hope; and hope maketh not aſhamed, "becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad

"in

" in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, who is given " unto us."

What privileges! how many, how free, how bleſſed are here declared to be the portion of the juſtified man, which he is to enjoy in his reconciled God! Each of them tending to eſtabliſh peace in his conſcience, and love in his heart, that he may delight himſelf in God and in his ways. The firſt and chief bleſſing in experience, which draws after it all the reſt, is the Spirit--

The Holy Ghoſt is given unto him, to be a witneſs for Jeſus, and to ſhed abroad the Fathers love through him. He comes as the Spirit of life to quicken the ſoul, which had been dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and to bring it to the knowledge of ſalvation, which he does, ſecondly by the gift of faith.

Being juſtified by faith. He enables the ſinner to believe in the finiſhed work of the God-man, and to truſt to the free grant of it in the word of God; whereby he ſees himſelf fully juſtified: Through the atonement of Jeſus freed from ſin and guilt; through the righteouſneſs of Jeſus entitled to life and glory, and therefore, thirdly, he has

Peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt his Lord--He ſees God is at peace with him---perfectly and continually reconciled. The peace is everlaſting which was made through the blood of the everlaſting covenant. The belief of this quiets and ſatisfies

ſatisfies the ſinner's conſcience; which being purged by the blood, and juſtified by the righteouſneſs of Jeſus Chriſt his Lord, is at peace, is freed from guilty fears, and is reconciled to God, yea to the juſtice of God, who can now be juſt, and yet the juſtifier of the ungodly. To what high honour is he then called? He is admitted into friendſhip with God, and has,

Fourthly, *Acceſs by faith into this grace, wherein he ſtands*---acceſs to a mercy-ſeat, to which he is invited to come freely, as a beloved child to an affectionate parent. Boldneſs and acceſs with confidence are required and commanded. "Let "us come boldly to the throne of grace: hav- "ing boldneſs to enter into the holieſt by the "blood of Jeſus," let us by faith make uſe of that new and living way, which he hath opened for us. O what a mercy is it thus to have acceſs to a gracious Father! how much is the mercy increaſed by his ſettling his children in it! We STAND in it, ſays the apoſtle, denoting the being fixed in a ſtate of perfect acceptance, conferred by ſovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God. How ſtrengthening to faith, how encouraging to hope! for,

Fifthly, *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Faith relies upon the truth of what God hath promiſed, and hope waits for the enjoyment of the good in the promiſe, but more eſpecially for the

the glory which is to be revealed. This hope of glory is full of rejoicing: becauſe every thing which hope looks at and draws its joy from, depends on the truth and faithfulneſs of a covenant God. There can be no failing on his part, and therefore on the believer's there can be no diſappointment. On this ground hope caſts its anchor, both ſure and ſtedfaſt, and finds all ſafe during the ſtorms of life, yea, has many a ſweet foretaſte of the promiſed glory, brought into the ſoul by theſe very ſtorms: for,

Sixthly, *We rejoice in tribulations alſo.* Theſe are ſo far from taking away the joy of the juſtified man, that they tend greatly to increaſe it, and to make it more holy, as well as more happy. Tribulations produce a plentiful harveſt of bleſſings, they bring forth

Patience, giving occaſion to exerciſe the graces of the Spirit, to find the truth and the power of them, and thereby working ſubmiſſion under the croſs to the will of God. "It is good for "me, ſays David, that I have been afflicted;" his troubles brought him to God---"Before I was "afflicted, I went aſtray." His troubles kept him near to God, dependent on the divine ſtrength to bear them with patience, and for an happy iſſue out of them. Whereby he learnt

Experience, which follows ſuffering and patience. Tribulations teach us what we are as ſinners, and what God is to his reconciled children,

dren. They make us ſenſible of our weakneſs, and of our being ſtrong only in the Lord---of our miſery, and of his comforts---of what we deſerve, and of what he ſaves us from---they bring us to live out of ourſelves, upon the ſure mercies of a covenant God: whereby our hope in him being tried, and by trials confirmed, we diſcover his love to us in ſuffering, and by daily experience become quite ſatisfied, that our

Hope is the grace of the Holy Spirit: for it anſwers the ſcripture-character; it rejoices in tribulation. It has good reaſon ſo to do. It experiences God's faithfulneſs. Every thing promiſed being made good to us in time, we thereby grow up into the full aſſurance of hope, that we ſhall not fail of receiving the promiſed glory. And this

Hope maketh not aſhamed, becauſe the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt, who is given unto us. He is given to ſatisfy our hearts of the love of God to us, and to lead us to ſtudy the nature and the perfections of his love. Behold! what manner of love, what a free, full, ſovereign, and everlaſting love, the Father hath beſtowed upon us. It is actually beſtowed and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghoſt. He ſhows us, how the Father loved us, even when we were without ſtrength; yea herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were ſinners and enemies, he gave his Son to live and die

die for us, much more then being now juſtified, we ſhall be ſaved from wrath, and brought to glory, through him. How does this commend and ſet off the love of God! It is the firſt cauſe of all the graces here mentioned, and beſtows them upon the moſt unworthy. Faith, juſtification by faith, acceſs to God, ſtanding in a juſtified ſtate, rejoicing in hope of glory, and rejoicing in the way to it even in tribulations, becauſe they exerciſe and improve patience, and put our graces to ſuch trials, as convince us, that they are the true graces of the Holy Spirit, and that we ſhall never be aſhamed of our hope in God. In this golden chain of experience love is the uppermoſt link. It was the firſt, and draws after it all the reſt. The free love of the Father gave his Son for us, and with him gave us all things. The ſame love has now given his Spirit to us, and he has enabled us to know and to believe, that we are juſtified, have acceſs to a reconciled God, ſtand accepted before him, &c. and that he is our loving God and Father in Jeſus. The ſenſe of this warms the heart, and ſweetly and powerfully influences the affections to delight in, and to walk in love with ſuch an exceedingly gracious and merciful God.

In this delightful portion of ſcripture the Holy Spirit teaches us, how he brings ſinners to know that God loves them. It is by believing in the right-

righteouſneſs and atonement of the Son of God. Hence ſpring peace and love---peace with God in the conſcience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inſeparable connection between thoſe two graces. The one cannot exiſt without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace will find that God is love: for being juſtified by faith, he will thereby ſee that God is at peace with him, and himſelf in a ſtate of free acceptance before him, in which he ſhall ſtand and be kept ſafe, until he receive the promiſed glory. The hope of which will be confirmed by his daily experience of God's faithfulneſs, making all things, even tribulations, work together for his good in the way to glory: thus will the Holy Spirit ſatisfy him of the love of God to his ſoul. And the perſuaſion of his love begets love. It ſoftens the hard heart. It warms the cold heart. It works kindly upon all the affections, and by ſetting before them every poſſible good to be enjoyed in their reconciled God, it mightily diſpoſes them to ſeek their ſupreme happineſs in walking humbly and cloſely with him.

Attend then, O my ſoul, to this ſcripture. Meditate upon the experience of which it treats. Pray for it. Pray for more of it. And above all, obſerve the great truth here taught thee by the Holy Ghoſt, namely, that thou canſt not have any true love of God, but what ariſes from the ſenſe of his being at peace with thee in

Jeſus.

Jeſus. O beware of falſe teachers: for there is great reaſon. Many talk big of their loving God for his own inherent lovelineſs. A fundamental miſtake. Myſtics, Quakers, natural religion men, dreaming metaphyſicians, and the motley tribe of moraliſts and deiſts, pretend to love an abſolute God, without viewing him in the covenant of grace, or as he has revealed himſelf in the incarnation of his Son. There has been no love of this kind in any heart upon earth for near ſix thouſand years. Adam in paradiſe might love him thus. But when driven out of paradiſe for ſin he could love him ſo no more. The promiſed ſeed of the woman, the word made fleſh, became then the object of his faith, and the only ground of his love. The ſcripture has clearly determined this----"We "love him, becauſe he firſt loved us---And in "this was manifeſted the love of God towards "us, becauſe that God ſent his only-begotten "Son into the world, that we might live through "him." When the Holy Ghoſt has taught this love of God to ſinners, and by believing has manifeſted it to their hearts; then they love him upon chriſtian principles; and ſinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that infinite mercy which led him to ſend his only-begotten Son into the world to finiſh the ſalvation of his people. They love him for ſending the Holy Ghoſt to enable them to ſee the everlaſting

everlaſting ſufficiency of this ſalvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it; whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them. This is heaven begun. The Father's love ſhed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt is the foretaſte of glory. Whoever enjoys it has found, what is more to be deſired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, ſweeter alſo than honey and the honeycomb. O it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preſerve it, to improve it, is become the one ſtudy of the happy believer. The panting of his ſoul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, O thou eternal Spirit, help me ſo to walk with my moſt loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my cenſcience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlaſting peace and love.

The prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much, being offered with energy. By the love of the Spirit it is anſwered. He not only preſerves, but alſo increaſes his own graces. He leads the believer to freſh diſcoveries of the Father's love, and puts him into poſſeſſion of the exceeding rich treaſures of it. He helps him to draw very ſtrong arguments for the comfort of his heart from the perfect FREENESS of divine love. Thus he reaſons---

Although I am beſet with temptations, and aſſaulted with corruptions, and in a world of troubles,

troubles, yet I need not fear but God will bring me ſafe through all: for I know he loves me. It is plain he does. I could never have loved him, unleſs he had firſt freely loved me. My love is only the reflection of his. I have been convinced of ſin, but it was not from myſelf: the conviction was of God. I have been convinced of righteouſneſs, and I put my whole truſt in the righteouſneſs of Jeſus. He is the only ground of my hope. I now reſt my ſoul upon the ſure foundation, which he hath laid. And this faith is not of myſelf. It is the gift of God. I aſcribe it to his ſovereign grace, that I have been enabled to look upon the Father as reconciled to me, pardoning me through the blood-ſhedding of his Son, accounting me righteous through the obedience of his Son, and in him accepting, loving, and bleſſing me. How could I experience theſe things but by the power of the Holy Ghoſt? And for what did I deſerve to experience them? The reaſon muſt be found in the riches of his own free grace. Did the Father foreſee any thing good in me, for which he choſe me in his Son? Was it for any worthineſs of mine, that the Son vouchſafed to take fleſh, and to live and to die for me? Was it for any foreſeen works, faithfulneſs, or diligence, in means that the Holy Ghoſt called me to know, to believe, and to enjoy the Father's love through the Son's ſalvation? O, no.

Away

Away with ſuch thoughts. I dare claim nothing for mine own, but ſin and ſhame. Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be all the glory. It was the good pleaſure of thine own will, which choſe me before the foundation of the world, and accepted me in the beloved; and now I know that thy counſels of old are faithfulneſs and truth. I experience the happy fruit and effect of them. I am brought to believe in thee and to love my God and Father, which I am ſatisfied I could never have done, if thy free love had not firſt purpoſed to ſave me, and now carried thy purpoſes into execution. To the praiſe of the glory of thy diſtinguiſhing grace, I am in poſſeſſion of the things which accompany ſalvation. O give me more grace, that I may daily make a better uſe of them, and may return thee better praiſe for thy free gifts of free grace.

It is free, and it is alſo COVENANT love. This is another of its divine properties: God commendeth his love towards the heirs of promiſe by giving them full ſecurity for its unchangeableneſs. And this view the Holy Spirit opens to them for the ſupport of their faith in times of trial. When they are walking in darkneſs and have no light, troubled on every ſide, without are fightings, within are fears, when in great heavineſs through failings in duty, through riſings of corruption, or, through manifold temp-

tations, then he discovers to them the treasures of covenant love, and enables them to draw rich consolation from that heavenly storehouse. An heir of promise under his teaching is often supported in this way: It is true, I am in trouble, but not forsaken. What if every thing I have and am in myself makes against me, yet God is on my side, a covenant God: for I believe the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and with manifold wisdom ordered all things relating to the heirs of promise. For their sakes, and to end all strife in their consciences about the certainty of their salvation, it pleased the blessed Trinity to enter into covenant, and to confirm their covenant by oath, thus giving them two immutable things to trust in, in which it is impossible for God to lie. O how strengthening to faith is this view of the unchangeableness of covenant love! If it be but a man's covenant, being properly signed and sealed, no one disannulleth or addeth thereto. And who shall disannul or add to the covenant of the Trinity? The creature cannot. God will not. His purpose of bringing many sons to glory is unalterably fixed in his own mind, and in order to make it a sure ground for their faith, he confirmed his immutable covenant by his immutable oath. On this security I rest my soul. A covenant God has enabled me to trust in his covenant engagements, Hence I see every thing relating to my

ſalvation abſolutely certain in the counſel and covenant of God; and I look upon my faith to be one of the effects of my being in the covenant. And faith as a covenant gift is an immutable gift. What a bleſſing is it, that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! It has been given me on the behalf of Chriſt to believe. And is not this from covenant love? What elſe could bring me to truſt in covenant faithfulneſs? Therefore by believing I have immutable things to depend upon for the certainty of my ſalvation. Upon them would I ſtay my ſoul, as well I may, and fix my heart upon them. O that I could bring more glory to my covenant God by truſting him with unſhaken confidence! His love to me demands it at my hands. His love contrived the plan of ſalvation. Love provided every thing needful to carry it into execution. The evidence, which he has given of this, was from the overflowings of love. His word of promiſe, ratified by covenant, confirmed by oath, the oath of the holy, bleſſed, and glorious Trinity, made to ſatisfy the heirs of promiſe of the immutability of the divine will concerning them--- O what miracles of love are theſe! And all to aſſure them, that the heart of Jehovah is invariably towards them for good! Yes, Lord, this is the great love wherewith thou loveſt me. And this is the evidence of thy love. Thou haſt brought me to believe it, and to put ſome honor

upon it. I desire to trust to thy covenant engagements without wavering. Establish, strengthen, settle my faith. Increase it from day to day, that I may grow in the knowledge and experience of that love which passeth knowledge. For

It is a free, a covenant, and also an EVERLASTING love. This is another of its most glorious properties. His love knows neither beginning nor end. It is without variableness or shadow of turning. The heart of God is always one and the same towards his chosen people: for he loveth them freely. The motives to it were all in, and from his own breast. The covenant was distinguishing love, secured to the heirs of promise by the most solemn engagements. And this crowns all. His love is of the same date with the covenant---not only before all worlds, but also from eternity. Therefore it is frequently called in scripture an everlasting covenant, and covenant-love is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: whereby before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor. Here is a never-failing source of comfort to a believing heart. Meditate, O my soul, upon it. Consider, what God hath done for thee,

thee, and give him the glory of his precious love. Has he not called thee by his Spirit, working in thee in due ſeaſon? Haſt thou not obeyed the call? Doſt thou not depend upon the finiſhed work of God thy Saviour; Art thou not juſtified freely by faith in him? Art thou not ſeeking daily to mortify the works of the fleſh, and thy earthly members, and that thy mind may be drawn up to high and heavenly things? Certainly theſe are good proofs of the purpoſes of the Father's love towards thee: becauſe theſe are the happy effects of his purpoſes now taking place in thy ſoul. O how greatly ſhould this conſideration eſtabliſh and confirm thy faith of eternal ſalvation to be enjoyed by Chriſt, and thereby kindle thy love towards God. He has indeed drawn thee by the ſweet attraction of his Spirit unto himſelf, and he has explained to thee the motive for his ſo doing---"Yea, I have loved "thee with an everlaſting love, therefore with "loving kindneſs have I drawn thee." His love diſcovered to thee in time is the fruit of his love before time: for the one is the effect of the other. If love had not been always in his heart towards thee, thy heart could never have been drawn in love to him. But he has drawn it. And thou art ſeeking to have it drawn more cloſely to him. Is it not thy daily wiſh? O for more love to my gracious Father---what a love has he ſhewn to me---what a free, covenant, everlaſting love! And

yet,

yet, alas! what poor returns do I make him? Holy Spirit of love, raiſe and exalt my affections, and let the conſideration of the wonderful love of my heavenly Father to me increaſe mine to him, and let mine abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all ſenſible experience.

The Holy Spirit, who is the great teacher and manifeſter of the Father's love, has revealed theſe properties of it in ſcripture for the eſtabliſhment of the faith of the children of God. He would have them believe aſſuredly, that God is their Father, not in name only, but in deed and in truth; that he has the bowels of the tendereſt parent, and that he freely, fully, everlaſtingly loves them in his dear Son. As he loves him, ſo he loves them. He embraces the head and the members with the ſame affection. And becauſe they can hardly believe this in times of trial and trouble, the Holy Spirit would therefore ſatisfy their hearts of it by diſcovering to them the unchangeableneſs of their Father's love, as it has been manifeſted in the divine covenant, and confirmed with the divine oath. In both which the witneſs of the Father to his children is given in this manner——I have freely loved you, I have engaged to love you, and I will ever be mindful of my covenant engagements--as I live, ſaith the Lord, I will love you unto the end--yea, I will bleſs you with all ſpiritual and eternal bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus--what he, your elder brother, is now in

in glory, that will my love make you---the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills ſhall be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from you, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on you.

Theſe are faithful ſayings, and worthy of all acceptation. O evil heart of unbelief, what pretence haſt thou to reaſon againſt the truth of them? O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt of receiving the goodneſs of them? Your Father is not a man, that he ſhould lie, neither the ſon of man that he ſhould alter his purpoſe. Hath he ſaid, and ſhall he not do it? Or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it good? Yes, the purpoſe of his heart, ſpoken with his mouth, ſhall be made good with his arm: all his perfections ſtand engaged to eſtabliſh his faithful word, and therefore it is a ſafe ground to build and reſt upon. Truſting to it the believer may boldly claim the promiſed bleſſings of his Father's love, and with a hope that will never make him aſhamed he may expect a growing enjoyment of its free covenant and eternal bleſſings.

Well then, O my ſoul, thou haſt conſidered the ſubject. What are thy ſentiments of the love of the Father? Are they ſuch as the ſcripture teaches? Take heed of error. A little miſtake here will have dreadful effects upon thy walk. Doſt thou believe, that thou, coming to the Father through faith in the life and death of his

his co-equal Son, art pardoned and juſtified before him, and that this thy coming to the Father through the Son is from the grace of the Spirit? Therefore the Three that bear record in heaven do witneſs to thy being an object of covenant love. Does this witneſs keep thy conſcience quiet, and thy heart happy? Canſt thou plead it againſt guilt and fear, and maintain the influence of it in dark and trying times? The love of thy heavenly Father is immutable: doſt thou experience it to be ſo? It is everlaſting. Canſt thou depend upon it as ſueh? It has provided all bleſſings for thee in Jeſus: art thou receiving them out of his fulneſs, grace for grace? It is propoſed to thy faith in *John* xvii. and in *Eph.* iii. as a never failing ſpring of conſolation. Read and try, whether thou art practically acquainted with what is there written. Examine the character of the Father's love; and be aſſured what is not agreeable to it, is not the teaching of the Holy Spirit. His office in thy ſoul is to witneſs to what he has revealed in the ſcripture, to explain it to thine underſtanding, to make it the ground of thy faith, and the enjoyment of thy heart. Doſt thou then underſtand, and believe, and enjoy the Father's love according to what the Holy Spirit has teſtified of it?

Perhaps thou art clear in thine underſtanding, but through the weakneſs of thy faith haſt but little enjoyment of the love of God. Why is thy faith

faith weak? Search into the cauſe (depend upon it God is not the cauſe), and having diſcovered it, inquire into the remedy. There is proviſion made in the covenant for all the infirmities of thy faith: for it was well ordered in all things and ſure, and thy faith was well ordered and ſure--infallible ſecurities were provided in the covenant to make it ſure. That thou ſhouldſt have it, that thou ſhouldſt keep it, and keep it too unto the end, the bleſſed Trinity have engaged by their immutable counſel, and their immutable oath. Therefore thou art now kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation. The power of God, which is thy keeper, has given thee faith, and keeps thy faith, that it fail not. Thou and it are well kept. A covenant God has the charge of both. Almighty love watches over thee, and underneath are the everlaſting arms. Till theſe fail, thy faith cannot fail. O what powerful motives are theſe to induce thee to believe without wavering! Conſider them carefully. And may the Lord render them the means of ſtrengthening thy faith, and of thereby enabling thee to cleave more cloſely in love to thy heavenly Father.

It may be thou art hindered from living by unſhaken faith, becauſe thou haſt ſo little love to God---he ought to have all thy heart and ſoul, and mind and ſtrength, but it grieves thee to obſerve what a ſmall part he has of them. This view

view is always humbling. Our love at beſt is not what it ought to be. It is not conſtant: it ebbs and flows. It is not perfect: the fleſh luſteth always contrary to the Spirit. It is not what God deſerves, as payment for love received: who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed ſinner? On earth it ſurpaſſeth knowledge. In heaven it ſurpaſſeth all returns of praiſe. The higheſt love of glorified ſaints is only acknowledgement, but not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore willing that God ſhould have all the glory of their ſalvation. To him they aſcribe it. The ſame mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it ſomething like their's. When thou art conſidering thy love to God, and aſhamed at the ſight of it, then look at his. Look eſpecially at his, when thine is little. Believing views of his will increaſe thine. Thine has nothing elſe to excite it, or to nouriſh it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyſelf with the ſparks of thy love to God, but with the pure conſtant flame of his love to thee. His is to keep up thine. His is the firſt cauſe, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unſettled, cold, and dull, then ſtudy the divine properties of his: theſe rightly underſtood will increaſe, ſettle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love: the ſenſe of it will comfort

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thy conſcience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee: while thou art muſing the fire will kindle. It will break out. Thou wilt ſpeak with thy tongue praiſe and thankſgiving to thy loving God and Father.

Thou art willing then, O my ſoul, and ready to ſet out to follow thy God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit thou haſt choſen him for thy portion, and in a conſtant dependence upon his grace thou haſt taken his way for thy daily walk. How great is the love, wherewith he loveth thee! Survey it. Meaſure, if thou canſt, the dimenſions of it in thine own particular caſe. The more thou art acquainted with it, the readier wilt thou be to give him all the glory of it, and to make ſuch acknowledgements as theſe:

I ſpeak the truth in Chriſt, I lie not, my conſcience bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, that being juſtified by faith I have found peace, and free acceſs to a reconciled God. We are agreed, and now I deſire to walk with him. He is my Father in Jeſus, and I know he has bowels of the tendereſt affection for me. I ought not, it would be baſe in me, to queſtion it, ſince he has ſhed his love abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghoſt: who has made me of one mind, of one heart, and of one way with himſelf. His way is become mine: for he has reconciled me to it by cauſing me to ſee, that he choſe me freely, as an object of his electing love, that he gave his Son

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to finiſh ſalvation work for me, and that he has now given his Spirit to me, who has called me, and given me ears to hear, who has beſtowed on me faith and hope, and has enabled me to look upon theſe as fruits of the Father's covenant grace, and everlaſting favor. O what exceeding riches of love are theſe! If I would declare and ſpeak of them, they are more than can be numbered. What am I, that I ſhould be accepted in the beloved? His Father mine. He ſees me, loves me, yea bleſſes me in him. My title is clear to all ſpiritual bleſſings, becauſe God being my God in Jeſus, all things are mine. He will make them all work together for my good. He that withheld not his own Son, but gave him for me, how ſhall he not with him freely give me all things? Having his free grant of them in the word of promiſe, and truſting to his faithfulneſs, I have ſet out to walk with my divine Friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his loving preſence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am ſeeking for more knowledge, and for more experience of his abundant love to me in his beloved Son. And for this end I would walk cloſe with him in his way---not to buy his love, it is ineſtimable---not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot ſtand together---not that I may deſerve it for my walk, but may freely receive it of him in my walk---not that he may give

give it me for walking with him, but that in walking with him I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time, as I hope by ſenſe to enjoy it in eternity. Whatever bleſſing, ſtrength, victory, or comfort, I ſtand in need of, I look to the fulneſs, which he has laid up in Jeſus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take poſſeſſion of it, for nothing done in me or by me, now or at any other time, but only in or for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by ſimple faith I find I am enabled to go on well. The ſenſe of his free, covenant, everlaſting love keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight. O that he may enable me to preſs forward, that I may hold my confidence, and the rejoicing of my hope ſtedfaſt unto the end! And why need I doubt of it, ſince he has me in his keeping? His love has bound itſelf to me by covenant engagements, which are my full ſecurity for what he has declared, "I will never leave thee nor "forſake thee."

Theſe deſires, I am perſuaded, are from thee, O Father of mercies. I could never have ſought my happineſs in thy love, unleſs thou hadſt firſt loved me. O grant me then the deſires of my heart. What thy good Spirit has put me upon ſeeking, let me by his grace find continually. He has manifeſted to me thy perfect reconciliation to thy

thy people through the life and death of Jeſus. It has been given me on his behalf to believe this. I have therefore taken thee for my God and my portion, and I would ſo walk with thee as to obtain a growing knowledge and experience of thy love. For this cauſe I bow my knees unto thee, holy Father. O hear and anſwer the prayer of faith. Give me grace to walk with thee in love all the way to glory. I aſk it in the name of Jeſus: for thou art the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. One Father, one family, one love. Thou receiveſt all thy children, whether in heaven or earth, into the ſame near relation, and embraceſt them with the ſame dear affection in thy beloved Son. O what a mercy is this! Bleſſed, for ever bleſſed be thy fatherly love, which choſe me to be of thy family, and which has brought me to know that I am a child of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus. I thank thee for giving me the deſire to live as ſuch, and to walk worthy of my high calling. O grant me then according to the riches of thy glory, (out of thine infinite treaſury of grace, and to the praiſe of the glory of thy grace) to be ſtrengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. He is the promiſe of the Father. All thy children have their new birth, and every faculty of the new man from him, and by the working of his mighty power they are kept, as well as renewed

newed day by day: for without him they can do nothing. Of this he has thoroughly convinced me. I know I cannot call thee Father, nor believe in thee, nor love thee, but by thy Spirit.

O my God, ſtrengthen me effectually by his grace in the inner man, for every purpoſe of ſpiritual life. Whatever he has engaged to do in thy children, let him do it in me, that through his preſence and power Chriſt may dwell in my heart by faith. O let him continually diſcover to me mine intereſt in Chriſt, and open to me the exceeding riches of thy love in him. Holy Father, let thy good Spirit abide with me, that I may know for certain Chriſt is one with me, and I am one with him, and may thereby be able to maintain conſtant fellowſhip with him---he dwelling in me and I in him. O may I thus live continually by the faith of the Son of God, depending always for acceptance with thee upon his atonement and his righteouſneſs, and ſo may find the happy fruit of his prayer to thee---"O righ-" teous Father, I have declared to my diſciples " thy name, and will declare it, that the love, " wherewith thou loveſt me, may be in them, and " I in them." Thou didſt hear, thou haſt anſwered times out of number, the requeſt of thy beloved Son. Lord God anſwer it to me. Let me rejoice in thy love, and find it to be the ſame to me, as to him. Let thy good Spirit root me and ground me in the knowledge of thy love to

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me in Jeſus. O grant me to be deeply rooted in the experience of it, that my faith working by love may bring forth much fruit to thy glory, and I may become ſo grounded in love, as to ſtand unſhaken, like a houſe built upon a rock, againſt every attack made upon my love to thee. O my God and Father, my heart is naked and open to thee. Thou knoweſt the ſecrets of it. Thou ſeeſt how fervently I pray for the abiding preſence of the Holy Spirit. My prayer comes from a feeling ſenſe of my want of him, and from a dependence on thy promiſe to give the Spirit to them that aſk him. Lord, I aſk. Grant me to be ſtrengthened by him with every needful gift and grace in the inner man. Send him to manifeſt plainer and plainer my union with Jeſus, in order to my keeping up communion with him: that having him dwelling in my heart by faith, I may be ſo eſtabliſhed in the experience of thy love to me in him, as to be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is that breadth, and length, and depth, and height of thy love. All the ſaints comprehend it. But the ſaints below leſs than they above. And ſome of them below comprehend more than others. I know but little: O my God, increaſe my knowledge of thy love in Jeſus. Whereunto I have attained, eſtabliſh me; and keep me preſſing forward for clearer diſcoveries of it. Help me to ſurvey it, ſo far as faith is able, in its moſt glorious dimenſions, and

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to praiſe thee for mine experience of its rich mercies. Holy Father, teach me ſtill more by thy Spirit of the boundleſs freeneſs, and of the endleſs fulneſs of thy love---let me know thy love in Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge. Although I cannot know it, as it is, my limited underſtanding being incapable of meaſuring the infinity of thy love, yet for this very reaſon let me be daily ſtudying to know more of it---growing up into Chriſt Jeſus by faith---abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghoſt---and increaſing in the love of God. Holy, bleſſed, and glorious Trinity, let me thus partake of the fulneſs of grace below, grace for grace, till I partake of the fulneſs of glory above---that I may be filled with all the fulneſs which is of God, with which thou haſt promiſed to fill thy children in earth and heaven. O magnify thy love towards me according to its greatneſs, and not according to my deſerts, or to my prayers. I know thou canſt do exceeding abundantly above all that I can aſk or think, according to the power that worketh effectually in me. Thy power engaged to act for me is the ſupport of my faith, and mine encouragement in my prayer. It is an infinite and almighty power, which has graciouſly begun, and has hitherto proſperouſly carried on the good work in my ſoul. To it all things are poſſible. Lord forbid I ſhould doubt of thy granting the petitions, which I have been offering up

unto thee in thy Son's name. That which thou haſt promiſed, thou art able to perform. O my God and Father, ſet thy power to work more effectually in me. Let the Spirit of might enlarge my thoughts of, and my faith in, thy precious love. Let me experience daily, how much more thou art able to do, than I have yet obtained; to give, than I have yet aſked; to increaſe, than I have yet thought. And whatever increaſe thou giveſt, may it draw out mine affections in greater love to thee, and to thy ways, and ſo be the means of bringing more glory to thee. For thy love in Jeſus the whole family in heaven and earth is aſcribing honor and praiſe. Accept my thanks, holy Father, together with theirs. To thee be glory in the church by Chriſt Jeſus throughout all ages world without end. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

The believer goes on ſucceſsfully, while he walks by faith in a conſtant dependence upon his reconciled God, and loving Father.

THE leading principle upon which he ſets out is this. God is my God and Father. He is perfectly reconciled unto me, and my conſcience is at peace with him through faith in his beloved Son. He loves me in him. He has manifeſted it plainly to me, and now my heart would cleave to him as my moſt tender parent. I would reſt in my love to him as he reſts in his love to me. It is entirely through the grace of the eternal Spirit, that I have been enabled thus to believe in the finiſhed work of Jeſus, and to experience the Father's love in him. By which means I have been ſatisfied of the love of the ever-bleſſed Trinity to my ſoul. Father, Son, and Spirit have covenanted to make me an heir of God, and a joint heir with Chriſt: From my belief and experience of theſe truths I have been enabled to chooſe God for my portion. His will is become mine. His appointed way is my courſe; and now I deſire ſo to walk with him, as to maintain in my conſcience the peace of God, and in my heart the love of God. I do not expect any new

title to thoſe inеſtimable graces. My claim is good and valid under Chriſt. I would not diſparage it by ſuppoſing, that my cloſe walk with God was to make any atonement for my ſins, or to be the leaſt part of my juſtifying righteouſneſs. I have theſe already, and perfectly too in Jeſus. The enjoyment of them is the thing I want. I am ſeeking for more of that peace with, and love to, the Father, to which I am entitled in his Son. His fulneſs, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all, is mine. A free grant of it has paſſed in the court of heaven, has been revealed in the record of truth, and I by believing have accepted the grant. I am in poſſeſſion of its privileges, and am enjoying its bleſſings. On the fulneſs of Jeſus I live this day. Out of it I hope to be receiving every grace, which I ſhall want for my ſafe and happy walk with his Father and my Father. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, for what thou knoweſt and haſt experienced of his abundant grace: which has enabled thee thus to reſolve to walk with thy reconciled God and loving Father. This day thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conſcience, and love to him in thy heart; peace like his, flowing from the ſenſe of being perfectly reconciled to thee—love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Whatever thou meeteſt with in thy work or warfare ought not to leſſen, but ought to exerciſe and to improve

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thoſe graces. Never forget that he is thy God--the God of peace. He ſtands related to thee in the deareſt and moſt indiſſolubie bond of love. He is thy Father in Jeſus. Keep the ſenſe of this always freſh upon thy mind, and thy ſteps will be ordered aright. Nothing will be able to ſtop thee in the way to heaven, or to ſeduce thee out of it; but every thing will bring thee forward. Whilſt thou canſt maintain peace and love, thou wilt go on proſperouſly againſt guilt and ſelf-righteouſneſs, againſt the wiles and aſſaults of thy ſpiritual foes, againſt the world which lieth in wickedneſs, and againſt every inward and outward trial. The Lord being on thy ſide, all theſe ſhall work together under him for thy good, and they ſhall be the means of making thee walk ſafely in the way, and of bringing thee happily to the end of it. The apoſtle has given us the whole plan in few words--"WE WALK, ſays "he, BY FAITH, and not by ſight." We direct our chriſtian courſe by believing, and not by ſeeing. Faith is to us the evidence of things not ſeen, and the ground of our hoping to enjoy them. We believe upon the authority of God's word, that they are what he deſcribes them to be: for faith, as a grace of the Spirit, conſiſts in giving credit to what God ſays. If it be a truth propoſed to the underſtanding, faith relies upon the infallible word, if it be a promiſe, faith depends upon the arm of God to make it

good. And whatever he has promiſed, faith (when it is as it ſhould be) does not ſtagger at difficulties, but reſts fully perſuaded, that what God hath promiſed, he is able alſo to perform. Faith looks at the word ſpoken, and overlooks ſeeming impoſſibilities: THUS SAITH THE LORD —that is enough for faith—full of ſatisfying evidence: for it knows, that to ſpeak and to do are the ſame thing with an unchangeable God.

How many errors in judgment, and conſequent miſtakes in practice, prevail at this day, chiefly ariſing from confounding faith with its fruits; and from not diſtinguiſhing between the word of God believed, and what will follow upon believing it aright. Thus ſome make aſſurance to be of the eſſence of faith, others make appropriation, and many make it conſiſt in an impreſſion upon the mind, that Chriſt loved me, and gave himſelf for me. Theſe are fruits: what faith ſhould produce, but not what it is. Theſe are effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. A believer ſhould be exhorted to make his calling and election ſure: for it is his privilege. He ought to give all diligence to attain aſſurance, to appropriate Chriſt with all his bleſſings to himſelf, and to be clearly perſuaded that Chriſt loved him and gave himſelf for him. Theſe are bleſſed fruits of believing. May God give his people more of them. But then the tree muſt be before the fruits, and the

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fruits grow upon the tree. Faith is firſt, and faith derives its being from believing the word of God, and all its fruits are continued acts of believing. And when you hear of believing, do you not always think of ſomething ſpoken? You cannot ſeparate theſe two in your mind. Something has been ſaid and propoſed to you before your belief can be called for. If nothing has been ſaid, belief has no exerciſe. Faith and the word of God therefore are related, as the effect and the cauſe: becauſe faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What God hath ſpoken in his word demands belief from all that hear it. When faith cometh by hearing it, then we aſſent to the truth of what God has ſaid, and we rely upon his faithfulneſs to make good what he has promiſed. Aſſurance is this faith grown to its full ſtature, but we are not born ſix feet high. Appropriation is a very comfortable acting of faith, when a man is perſuaded of his intereſt in covenant mercies: and, from what he then feels, can ſay, Chriſt loved me and gave himſelf for me; but he has not this comfort in times of heavineſs, he may be walking in darkneſs and having no light, yea in the hidings of the Lord's countenance, and yet even then he may truſt ſimply to what God hath ſpoken; which is true faith, and more exalted faith, than that which draws its evidence from its appropriating acts and its preſent experience. The more a

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man truſts to ſenſe, the leſs he lives by faith: for ſenſible feelings are not faith. Impreſſions are not believing. I ſee the ſun; I hear a ſound; I feel an object: faith has no place in theſe inſtances. Its eſſence is believing and truſting what God hath ſpoken. If his word be believed, and by believing, the conſcience find peace, and the heart joy: Theſe are joy and peace IN believing. They come from believing; are its effects; and no more enter into the eſſence of faith, than comfortable feelings do into the eſſence of man. He is as truly a man, when miſerable, as he is when comfortable.

Theſe miſtakes ſhould be carefully guarded againſt, becauſe they are chiefly pernicious to the children of God; who are kept by them from growing up into aſſurance, into appropriation, and into the ſenſible experience of God's love to them in Chriſt Jeſus. They are puzzled ---they are miſled, by being told they have no faith, if they have not aſſurance, &c. They examine themſelves, but cannot find any ſuch fath. This diſcourages them. They are tempted to think they have no true faith, becauſe they have not what certain perſons talk of. But if they would adhere ſtrictly to the word of God, and would take their ideas from it, they would ſee how ſimple and plain a thing believing is, and would ſoon be ſatisfied that they were true believers. Which conviction would have many bleſſed

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effects, especially these--it would put them upon seeking for an increase of faith, and upon expecting the proper fruits of faith. What nourishes faith, ripens them: for they cannot be produced so long as persons are doubting whether they have any faith at all. They would see how desirable it is to believe without doubt or wavering, what honor it puts upon God's word, what comfort it brings to them. And they would be waiting in the appointed means for grace to maintain, for grace to improve their faith, that they may be going on from faith to faith. While this was their end and aim, faith in act and exercise, maintained and improved, would bring in daily growing evidence of their being indeed partakers of the faith of God's elect. Living by faith, walking by faith, would demonstrate to them their spiritual life and walk, as plainly as natural life and walk can be demonstrated by any outward actions.

Here is great need, O my soul, to read the scripture, and to pray for the Spirit of wisdom. Read, pray much; lest thou shouldest err concerning the faith. Every error will be a stumbling block in the way of thy holy walk, and make thee tired of it, or seduce thee out of it. Let it be one of thy daily petitions, Lord, save me from all mistakes concerning the faith of the Gospel; and let the word of God, by which faith cometh and groweth be thy daily study.

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This is thy preſent buſineſs. Now ſet out, truſting to what God hath ſpoken, and relying on what he hath promiſed. On this principle proceed, as it is laid down by the apoſtle, *Col.* ii. 6. "As ye have therefore received Chriſt Jeſus the "Lord, ſo walk ye in him." He is expreſſing his joy at his beholding their order, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of their faith in Chriſt, and he would teach them how to maintain their faith throughout their chriſtian courſe. How did you receive Chriſt at firſt? Was it not by believing? Receiving Chriſt and believing in him are in *John* i. 12, ſuppoſed to mean the ſame thing. And in *John* xvii. 20, 21, our Lord ſays, that they who believe in him through the word are one with him. Chriſt then is received by faith, and by the ſame faith, by the belief of the ſame word of God, we walk in him, ſo as to be rooted and grounded and eſtabliſhed in the faith. Our walk is in him, not any thing diſtinct from him; but is the effect of union with him. By him we live, *in* him we walk—rooted in him, we grow, as a branch in the vine—built up in him, we are fixed as a building on a ſure foundation, and thereby we become eſtabliſhed and ſtrengthened in the faith. Every ſtep we take is by faith, by the ſame faith, wherewith Chriſt was received.

He muſt be received always, as he was received once. There is no change of object, and there muſt be no change of faith, but the ſame continued

tinued truſt on his word, and the ſame dependence on his promiſed ſtrength. We never ſet out to walk with a reconciled God till we are one with Chriſt by faith, and know our union with him, and our walk is in conſequence of this. If we go on at all it is by communion with him. We can receive only out of his fulneſs grace for grace, to make us willing and able to go forward. Our fellowſhip with him is in every part and in every moment of our walk, and this is as neceſſary as our fellowſhip with the air and elements of this world is to every thing that concerns our natural walk. Our wiſdom to guide our ſteps, our progreſs in the way, our courage and ſtrength, our warfare and victory, every grace and every bleſſing is received by faith, and is the effect of our communion with Jehovah Jeſus. We truſt in his word, we rely on his arm, we wait on his faithfulneſs, and ſo go forward: for he makes good what he had promiſed to give us in our walk, which confirms the peace of God, eſtabliſhes our hearts in the love of God, increaſes our faith, and thereby makes our daily walk more comfortable to us and more glorious to him.

But if faith conſiſt in believing and truſting the word of God, it may be inquired, how ſhall we know the difference between true and falſe, between dead and living faith. It may be known from the cauſe. The fruit of the Spirit

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is faith. He produces it. It is his gift, beſtowed by his operation, continued by his power, increaſed by his bleſſing, and carried on to the end, by his never leaving nor forſaking his own work. And he makes it known to be his. He gives eyes to ſee it, and hearts to acknowledge it. Therefore the apoſtle ſays of them who have received the Spirit of God, that they KNOW the things which are freely given to them of God; by faith they both know the reality, and alſo taſte the ſweetneſs of thoſe free gifts of free grace.

It may be known from the effects. Dead faith brings forth nothing. Living faith is fruitful. It produces a hearty truſt in the truth of what God hath ſpoken, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulneſs of what God hath promiſed. It gives him credit for the finiſhed ſalvation of his Son, and puts honour upon his record concerning it; whereby peace is received into the conſcience, and love into the heart. Upon which there follows a ſettled dependence upon this reconciled God, and loving Father for the fulfilling of every promiſe, and this is improved by daily experience. He that truſteth in the Lord is never confounded. God is faithful. His promiſes cannot fail. Bleſſed is the man that truſteth in him. The Lord God will be a ſun and ſhield unto him: the Lord will give him grace and glory.

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As for the hypocrites, it is not ſo with them. The holy ſpirit was not the author of their faith. It was a fancy of their own, formed in their heads without any warrant from God. There was no life in it, and no living effects from it. There was the form, and nothing more. They made a profeſſion, but never came to any enjoyment. They had no vital union, and therefore they could not have any real communion with Chriſt. They could not, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, walk IN him, and therefore in the hour of temptation they fell away, and came to nothing. Take heed then, O my ſoul, of miſtakes. Examine carefully of what ſort thy faith is. Bring it to the ſtandard of ſcripture; and ſee what went before believing---ſee whether thou doſt now from thy heart believe what God hath ſpoken--wait for the effects. Doſt thou ſo truſt his word, as to take him for thy God and thy portion? Art thou walking with him? And art thou depending on him to beſtow the promiſed graces and bleſſings on thee in thy walk? If this be thine experience; thou art ſet out well; go on. Remember where every thing relating to thy walk is to be had. The Father's love has laid it all up in the Son's fulneſs, and it is the office of the holy Spirit to teach thee how to receive out of it grace for grace. He teaches by his word. With this in thy hand, and his light in thine underſtanding, read and ſtudy what he has

has promiſed thee for thy ſafe, happy, and holy walk. Take no ſtep without the direction of his word, and expect at every ſtep, that he will make good to thee what he has promiſed. Thou wilt very ſoon find the neceſſity of this dependence upon him: for ere thou haſt well begun thy walk, thou wilt be called upon to exerciſe thy faith and put it to trial. Thou wilt meet with many things in thee averſe to this holy walk; and many more to diſtreſs thee in it. The body of ſin, the old man, the fleſh, with its affections and luſts are ſtill in thee. It is of their nature to be luſting, and to be always putting forth ſome of their filthy motions, in order to draw thee to walk after the fleſh, and not after the Spirit. The tempter helps them all he can. He knows how to improve them to his own intereſt: and if from what is paſſing within thee, there be a ſight and ſenſe of ſin, then if he can get thee to look at it in his view, he will act upon thy legal and ſelf-righteous tempers, and will inject ſuch vile inſinuations as theſe againſt the Lord and againſt his Chriſt.--

How is it that I am yet the ſubject of ſin? It is ſtill in me. It cleaves to me, as the fleſh to my bones, and it mixes ſo with my duties, that I cannot perform them without it. I ſometimes fear I am nothing but ſin. When I attempt to walk with God, ere I ſet out, ſomething evil ariſes within me, and ſtops me. Some proud unbelieving

unbelieving thought, ſome ſenſual affection, ſome worldly diſpoſition, ſome corruption or other is ever at hand to hinder my courſe. What then muſt I think of myſelf? I ſcarce know what. Things, I ſee, do not grow better. I have been long hoping for it; but I find there ſtill dwelleth no good thing in me: ſo that I am almoſt ready to queſtion the truth of my grace, and it is with great difficulty I can keep up any peace in my conſcience.

When the believer is attacked in this manner, (and who is not at ſome time or other) how is he to defend himſelf? Will his ſkilfulneſs in the word of righteouſneſs, and his faith in the word of reconciliation keep him ſafe in the hour of temptation? Yes. By the grace of the holy Spirit the leſſons before learnt will be enforced, and brought into uſe. This is the time to maintain faith in the atonement, and in the righteouſneſs of the God-man. Now it is to be tried in the fire; and it is put to the trial, that it may come out of it, like gold, proved to be ſterling metal, and refined from its droſs---better in every reſpect for having gone through the fire. The trial of faith is far more precious than that of gold which periſheth. It is therefore put into the furnace, that the believer may know the truth of it, and may experience the bleſſings of it. Faith conflicting with unbelief is a good fight---ſometimes ſharp; but always profitable. The fleſh may be

weak

weak and ready to yield, faith may be hard put to it, but victory is certain. During the battle the warrior is invincible in the whole armour of God. He takes to him the ſhield of faith, and holds it up againſt the fiery darts of ſatan. He draws out the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and with it he defeats ſatan. He conſults or remembers a ſcripture ſuitable to his preſent caſe, and this being ſet home by the holy Spirit puts an end to the engagement, and reſtores and ſettles ſweet peace in the conſcience. How often has he applied the following paſſage, which the Lord ſpeaks concerning his true Iſraelites, *Jer.* xxxii. 38, 39, 40, 41. "They SHALL "be my people, and I WILL be their God, and "I will give them one heart, and one way, that "they may fear me FOR EVER, for the good of "them, and of their children after them, and I "will make an everlaſting covenant for them, "that I will not turn away from them to do "them good; but I will put my fear into their "hearts that they ſhall not depart from me; "yea, I will rejoice over them to do them "good."

What ſtrong conſolation is there in this ſcripture? Every ſentence has an argument in it, tending to eſtabliſh peace with God, and to maintain it in the midſt of war. How quieting and ſatisfying to the troubled conſcience in his covenant purpoſe? "They SHALL be my peo-

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" ple, and I WILL be their God." They ſhall, becauſe I will. My will ſhall make them willing. And in the day of my power, when my purpoſe takes place, I will give them one heart, turned to myſelf, and one way, to walk with me by faith, as obedient children with their loving Father. This I will do for them that they may fear me FOR EVER, that the fear of offending me may rule always and by all means in their hearts.

O what promiſes are theſe! What can weak faith require farther to ſilence its doubts? How great is the goodneſs of God to his children, who knowing their frame, and whereof they are made, for the good of them, and of their children after them, has laid ſuch a foundation for their faith, that they may build on it and not be afraid, yea ſtanding on it they may fight the good fight of faith, aſſured of victory.

I will make, ſays their God, an everlaſting covenant for them, a covenant ordered in all things and ſure by the counſel and oath of the bleſſed Trinity, the two immutable things, in which it is impoſſible God ſhould lie: the mountains ſhall depart and the hills ſhall be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from them, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on them. My covenant was made for them, and ſhall be made good to them. As I live, ſaith

the Lord, I will not turn away from them to do them good. I will never change my purpoſe, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth. I mean nothing but good to them. My heart is fixed upon it. And I will not leave the event to them. They ſhall not have the management of my purpoſes, nor have any power to defeat them. My will to do them good ſhall not depend on their will, or on their faithfulneſs, or on any thing in themſelves. I have taken all their concerns into mine own hands, and I will conduct them all to the praiſe of the glory of mine own grace. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me—they SHALL not depart from me. They are not the cauſe of their not departing, but I am. I have taken it upon myſelf. I will give them grace to walk cloſe with me, and to fear me always. I have covenanted for all, the means as well as the end, and I will keep them by my almighty power, till they receive the end of their faith, even the ſalvation of their ſouls. "Yea, "I will rejoice over them to do them good." This confirms all the reſt. His purpoſe of doing them good, his executing it, his continuing it, his increaſing it through time and through eternity, is a matter of rejoicing to the Lord God. He delights in it. It always was, and always will be the joy of his heart, his crown and glory. He will not, he cannot be deprived of his joy.

Conſider

Conſider this, thou poor diſtreſſed ſoul, who art in heavineſs through manifold temptations, and ready to faint through the weakneſs of thy faith. Take courage. Thy ſalvation is ſafe. Thy Father, who is in heaven rejoices in it: he will ſave: he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will reſt in his love; he will joy over thee with ſinging. And his joy too ſhall be thine. As ſure as God is in Zion, thou ſhalt return and come to Zion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon thy head, thou ſhalt obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away for ever.

O what a diſcovery is here of the ever loving heart of our heavenly Father! What more could he promiſe in order to put an end to all ſtrife in the conſciences of his afflicted children! He has engaged in a covenant of peace to do good, nothing but good, to them. He has undertaken the whole of the covenant---what was to be done in them, as well as for them---to work out, to apply, and to ſecure their ſalvation. It is his unchangeable purpoſe, not to depart from them, and not to ſuffer them to depart from him, but he will rejoice in doing them good, and that for ever. This ſcripture, when underſtood and applied by the holy Spirit is received as full evidence of the unchangeable love of God to his children, and then it quiets their troubled minds. They can believe God to be their God ſtill in an unchangeable covenant, and they become ſatisfied that he

has made them, and will keep them his people for ever. When they can thus mix faith with the promiſe, it then becomes the means of their reſting on the faithful arm of God in the hour of temptation, and of their finding him ſtill a God of peace: whereby peace is eſtabliſhod in their conſciences, and multiplied in their hearts. They learn to put more truſt in him, as their perfectly reconciled Father, and to approach him with more holy filial confidence. The trial of their faith, ſharp as it was, yet has done them great good. It has proved their peace and has confirmed it. They know now well that it is the peace of God; and they have been taught how to maintain it. War makes good ſoldiers. The trials of their grace are for their improvement of grace. Their peace has been therefore ſhaken, like a new planted tree, that it may take deeper and faſter root. Being thus ſtrengthened in the faith, and having the peace of God ruling in their hearts, they can meditate upon this ſcripture, and turn it into a ſubject of prayer and praiſe——

O gracious God and Father, pardon my thoughts of thy love to me in Jeſus. I was tempted, and ready to give way to unbelief: but the gracious proviſion made in thy word was the means of keeping me in the hour of temptation. O my God, make the word, in which thou haſt cauſed me to put my truſt, more precious to my

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ſoul. Open ſtill more to me the fulneſs of it, and put me into happier poſſeſſion of its promiſed bleſſings. I praiſe thee, I worſhip thee for revealing this promiſe by thy Spirit, and for applying it by his grace with comfort to my heart. I now ſet to my ſeal, that it is true. It is a faithful ſaying and worthy of all acceptation. Glory be to thee that I accept it, and enjoy the good promiſed in it. O Father of mercies, what am I that I ſhould be made one of thy people, and ſhould have thee for my God. This love paſſeth knowledge. O help me to underſtand more, give me to find more of thy covenant love. Make my heart one with thee. Lead me in thy one way, that I may fear thee for ever. And when temptations come, ſuch as I have been in, grant they may bring me nearer to thee, and may be the means of my making uſe of what thou haſt provided for me in thy Son's fulneſs. O let thy good Spirit abide with me to eſtabliſh my faith in thine everlaſting covenant, that I may believe thou wilt never turn from me to do me good. Merciful God grant me this grace in every hour of need. Thou haſt given me thy word for it, and therein thou haſt enabled me to put my truſt. On thy faithful promiſe I would depend, and on nothing in myſelf. Thou haſt ſhewed me ſomething of my heart, and I feel it is revolting and ready always to rebel againſt God; but thou haſt undertaken

undertaken to put thy fear into it, that it ſhall not depart from thee: therefore into thy faithful hands I commit it. Keep me, my God, by thy mighty power through faith unto ſalvation. *Amen, Amen.*

Happy trials! which have ſo good an iſſue, and bring forth ſuch peaceable fruits. My brethren, account it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, if they lead to the exerciſe of grace, and occaſion fervent effectual prayer. The believer, thus tried, learns by practice the neceſſity of being at peace with God, and of maintaining it in order to walk with God. He is put upon ſtudying the nature of this peace. He reads and meditates upon the revealed account of it. He ſees it is a perfect unchangeable peace, ſecured to him by the everlaſting covenant of the bleſſed Trinity, who have engaged to ſave him from all his ſins and miſeries, and never to turn away from doing him good. To this he truſts. He commits himſelf to the care of this covenant God; and he finds the promiſe true. In temptation he believes, and is delivered. In his warfare out of weakneſs he is made ſtrong. He fights the good fight of faith, and he conquers all his enemies. He learns from trials to truſt with more confidence. He not only maintains, but alſo improves peace with God. He depends on what God has promiſed to them, who walk with him,

and the promiſe is made good, and he learns to go on more comfortably, and daily walks cloſer with his heavenly Father.

The enemy looks on him with malice. He envies his ſtate. He once knew the heaven of communion with God, but he was lifted up with pride, and fell. It ſtirs up every infernal temper in him to ſee the happy believer, who had fallen like him, reſtored to what he can never expect. Hence either as a fly ſerpent, or as a roaring lion, he never ceaſes to tempt. As ſoon as one wile fails, he has another ready. He is night and day plotting and ſcheming, waiting for an opportunity to make a ſeaſonable attack. While conſcience is at peace with God, and lives under the protection of the blood of ſprinkling, he tempts in vain. But he does not deſpair of ſucceſs. He knows he has an ally within us in faſt league with ſin, and therefore he ſtill hopes to draw him into ſin by ſurprize or aſſault. In which he is indefatigable. He is never tired. He is always tempting the believer, not ſo much to groſs offences, as to ſpiritual wickedneſs. Sly injections, legal inſinuations, and ſelf-righteous thoughts, are his moſt common temptations. With theſe he tries to ſhake the peace of conſcience, and he forms his attack generally in this manner.

How can you be a child of God, and yet be, as you are? There is nothing in you, for which God ſhould look upon you, and love you. What have you?

you? What ceaſing from evil, what learning to do well, to recommend you to him? How can God love any thing, unleſs it be agreeable to his will, and what can he delight in unleſs it be conformable to his image? But do you live up to his will, and is his image perfectly renewed in you? Have you grace, and do you live up to it? Are you a chriſtian, and are you like Chriſt? How are your duties? Juſt as they ſhould be? You know they are not, and how can God be pleaſed with them, when you are not pleaſed with them yourſelf? How is your walk? Is it ſuch as becometh your high calling—cloſe with God, and at a vaſt diſtance from ſin, and the world? How is your warfare? Is the whole armor of God kept buckled on? And are you always in the ſtrength of the Lord a conqueror? Examine, and try yourſelf. Bring forth that one good thing, for which God ſhould love you, and beſtow his bleſſing upon you. You have no ſuch thing. You have nothing to merit, yea, nothing to recommend you to the divine favour: and therefore is it not great preſumption to fancy, that God will love ſuch a one as you, whoſe juſt deſert is wrath and everlaſting deſtruction?

Theſe are ſome of the depths of ſatan. He knows, how ſtrongly we are by nature attached to the covenant of works, and that if he can get the believer to look off from Jeſus, expecting to ſee ſomething in himſelf, for which God ſhould

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love him, he ſhall then weaken his faith and ſhake his peace. In this ſnare he has catched many a child of God. The temptation is ſuitable to the workings of our legal minds: it flatters our ſelf-righteous hopes: and is vaſtly pleaſing to the pride of our carnal hearts. No wonder then, ſo long as there is fleſh in us as well as ſpirit, this artful ſuggeſtion ſhould be ſometimes received in this manner---Have I any thing for which God ſhould eſteem me and bleſs me? I wiſh I could diſcover ſome amiable temper, or ſome praiſe-worthy deed, which might recommend me to the particular regard of God. Indeed at preſent I have not any ſuch. But I hope to attain it ſome-time or other. If I do but uſe more diligence, and watchfulneſs, and wait more conſtantly in the means of grace, perhaps I may attain it ſoon. However there can be no harm in trying. I will exert myſelf. And I hope the day will come, when I ſhall be ſome way deſerving of the divine favor.

Here the temptation has taken place. As the ſerpent beguiled Eve through his ſubtilty, ſo is this man's mind corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt. The ſubtile ſerpent has attacked the liberty of the child of God, and has darkened his underſtanding, and obſcured his view of goſ-pel grace. His eye is not now ſingle: His heart is not now ſimple, in the finiſhed ſalvation. He has been deceived into a legal dependence, and

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is giving way to a ſpirit of bondage. If he was left to himſelf, the enemy would lead him captive at his will. Satan deſires to have him, that he may ſift him as wheat, but he is not ſuffered to blow any thing away, except a little chaff: for the holy Spirit, in whoſe keeping he is, diſcovers and defeats the attempts of ſatan. He brings to his mind, and enables him to make uſe of what he before knew of the doctrine of grace. The preſent trial requires the practice, and affords occaſion for the improvement of his former leſſons. He had learnt from ſcripture, truths very different from the ſuggeſtions, to which he was ready to yield. He was therein taught, that the Father's love to his children does not ſuppoſe merit in them. Grace does not follow works: for then grace would be no more grace. Election is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God who ſheweth mercy. For we are ſaved freely by grace through faith, and that not of ourſelves; it is the gift of God. The election of grace is from mere love and ſovereign favor, and has no motives to influence it but the good pleaſure of the divine will. The objects of it are not the worthy, but the unworthy—not innocent, but fallen man—ſinners, as ſuch, no way conditioned or qualified—the loſt, the helpleſs, the ungodly—yea the chief of ſinners---open enemies and rebels againſt God. They are not ſaved by works of righteouſneſs, which they have done,

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or can do, leaſt any of them ſhould boaſt: For boaſting is abſolutely excluded. Salvation was ſo contrived, was ſo wrought out, and is ſo applied, that he who glorieth ſhall have nothing left him to glory in, but the Lord. No fleſh can glory in his preſence: for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

So ſoon as the ſpirit of God opens this view of the exceeding riches of divine grace, the believer ſees his miſtake. He finds that he was departing from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, by ſuppoſing that the love of God followed merit, and that he ſhould be loved more according as his walk recommended him. His eyes are opened. The deluſion vaniſhes. The perfect freeneſs, and the abſolute ſovereignty of the Father's love as revealed in ſcripture, is manifeſted to him. He reads, and mixes faith with what he reads, and ſo recovers himſelf out of the ſnare of the devil. Some ſuch paſſage as this is made the means of his deliverance, *Pſ.* ciii. 17. "The mercy of the "Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting upon "them that fear him." Precious words! full of rich conſolation to thoſe, who have been tempted to ſeek ſome qualifications in themſelves, on account of which they might be entitled to the love of God, and who have been diſtreſſed upon their not finding it. The holy Spirit teaches ſuch perſons to look out of themſelves, to an object

ject exactly ſuitable to their caſe. He directs them to the divine mercy---a never failing ſpring of comfort---to that mercy, which reacheth from eternity to eternity---and which confers its richeſt favors, not for the worthineſs of the receiver, but to the praiſe of the grace of the giver. Here he would have them fix their eyes, and expect relief to their hearts. Out of the fulneſs of mercy they may always receive grace for grace; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlaſting to everlaſting upon them that fear him. Every word is weighty. Meditate upon it, O my ſoul, and may the conſideration of each lead thee to exalt that mercy of God, which is over all his works.

JEHOVAH is the word here rendered Lord. It is the incommunicable name, expreſſive of the incommunicable nature of the Godhead. It ſignifies the peculiar manner of the divine exiſtence, which is in, and of itſelf, underived, and independent. O how happy is it for thee, that there is mercy in the ſelf-exiſtent Godhead, and that every perfection in it will be for ever exalted, even juſtice itſelf, for the exerciſe of mercy. May the holy Spirit teach thee more of its nature, and make thee daily more acquainted in thine experience with its free grace and free gifts.

MERCY is that perfection in Jehovah, which diſpoſes him to ſave miſerable ſinners: not a blind

blind mercy, ſuch as infidels dream of—but conſiſtent with the honor of his law, and exerciſed to the glory of its holy precepts and of its juſt ſanctions: therefore mercy and truth are ſo often mentioned together in ſcripture. God will not ſhew any mercy to ſinners, but ſuch as tends to eſtabliſh his truth. Not one of his words can be broken, nor can one tittle of them ever fail. He will be juſtified in all his ſayings, and clear when he is judged. He will be true and juſt, whenever he is merciful: his mercies being all covenant-mercies, and all given in, and through Chriſt Jeſus. All men are by nature children of wrath, and only they, who are choſen and called in Chriſt Jeſus, are ſaved from wrath. Theſe are veſſels of mercy. His mercy is to them the love of a tender parent to his miſerable children. He pities them, and determines to ſave them from their ſins, in due time he quickens them, gives them eyes to ſee, and hearts to believe his love to them in Jeſus, as the apoſtle witneſſes--
" God who is rich in mercy, for his great love
" wherewith he loved us, even when we were
" dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with
" Chriſt."

But for what reaſon, and upon what account, is he merciful to them? His mercy has no motive, but his own will. The objects of his mercy are corrupt fallen creatures, deſerving his wrath, even as others; and therefore he does not deal with them upon the footing of deſert. If he

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ſhewed them mercy for any fore-ſeen works of theirs, becauſe he knew they would repent and believe the goſpel, and walk worthy of it, mercy would then be turned into juſtice, and would loſe both its name and its nature. Whereas he ſaith unto Moſes, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compaſſion on whom I will have compaſſion. It is from mine own freedom and ſovereignty, that I have mercy on any ſinners. The cauſe is in myſelf, and not in them. I have compaſſion, on whom I will. It is from mine own mere love, that I have determined to be gracious to them; and my love has determined to ſave them, and the way alſo in which I will ſave them. I have appointed the end, and the means at the ſame time. Of mine own motion and good will I have reſolved to give my Son for them, and my ſpirit to them, that they may repent and believe the goſpel, and walk worthy of it, and ſo I may bring them through my tender mercies to eternal ſalvation. If this was not the caſe, how could the deſcription be true, that mercy is FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING. The mercy of God knows no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of turning. It is always the ſame. His fatherly heart ever entertained thoughts of mercy towards them: for when he ſhews them mercy, it is ſaid to be according to the eternal purpoſe, which he had purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus ---not for their merits, but for his mercies ſake,

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not for what they have any claim to, but for his own name's ſake. He gives all from mercy, and he would have all the glory returned to the mercy of the giver. What he gives, that he continues, and according to covenant engagements. Covenant mercies are ſure mercies. "I will make an everlaſting covenant for you, "ſays he, even the ſure mercies of the beloved." They have already been made ſure to him. He is now in full poſſeſſion of every promiſed mercy. And he has received them, not as a private perſon, but as the head of the body, the church. He keeps them for the uſe of his church-members. And as ſure as the crown is upon his head, ſo ſurely will it be upon every one of their heads: for they are in the ſame covenant with him, whoſe ſure mercies reach from eternity to eternity. O what a view is here open to the eye of faith! Mercy always purpoſing, and in due time beſtowing its free bleſſings upon ſinners---mercy, without beginning, and without ending. The holy Spirit often calls upon us to behold it in this light: for he has not celebrated any of its divine properties, ſo much as this. It is frequently the noble ſubject of thankſgiving in the Pſalmiſt's hymns. He has dedicated the 136th entirely to the praiſe of mercy, and going through the works of nature, providence, and grace, he aſcribes them one by one to that mercy, which endureth for ever. O happy, thrice happy objects

jects of it! What was in the heart of the Father of mercies towards you from everlasting, will be so to everlasting. His sure mercies are yours. His compassions towards you fail not. Whatever you want for your successful walk he has promised to give you. Be not discouraged then. He will supply all your wants, not for your sakes, but for his mercies sake. Are you sensible of your unworthiness? That's well. Mercy is for such. It can have no glory, but from such, as you. Trust it, and be assured you will find, that it endureth for ever and ever.

If a doubt should arise in your mind---it is true, mercy in God, cannot fail, but the exercise of it towards me may fail: I may so walk as to deprive myself of all claim and title to it. The Psalmist has given a direct answer to this ill grounded suspicion. He says, the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

UPON THEM THAT FEAR HIM. This is their Character: they fear their God. Once there was no fear of God before their eyes; but now they know him to be their Father. The Spirit of adoption has given them joy and peace in believing it. Hence a holy filial fear rules in their hearts, and influences their walk. While it operates thus; and as obedient children, they fear to offend their loving Father, and desire to please him in all things, what ground have they to suspect that his mercy towards them should fail?

But may they not ceaſe to fear him, and then he will ceaſe to be merciful to them? No, bleſſed be God. He has made ample proviſion in this caſe. "I will put my fear, ſays he, in-"to their hearts, and they SHALL NOT depart "from me." This fear is one of the fruits of the Spirit, which he produces in all the children of God. And they have it from him as a covenant bleſſing, which is full ſecurity for its continuance. It is one of the graces provided for them in Jeſus by the Father's immutable love. "I will give them, ſays he, one heart and one "way; that they may fear me FOR EVER!" The holy Spirit is the guardian of this never failing fear. It is his office to put it, and then to keep it in their hearts. He has the whole charge of it, and therefore he has promiſed to abide with them for ever, that they may fear the Lord all the days of their lives.

How exactly ſuited is this ſcripture to the caſe of the tempted chriſtian! What a full proviſion is there made in it for his ſafety and peace! God has mercy for him and plenteous redemption---mercy reaching from everlaſting to everlaſting --always kind to the miſerable. Mercy and miſery are related as ſin and ſalvation. There is not any thing, which a ſinner can want, but mercy has a ſupply for him---a promiſed, a covenant, a never failing ſupply. It is a Father's mercy, which will never leave his children, and

the ſame mercy will not ſuffer them to leave him. His mind is fixed upon ſhewing them mercy for ever and ever; and therefore he gives them his Spirit to abide with them, and to dwell in them. He abides with them, and they live: he dwells in them, and they walk in the fear of God. And by the ſupply of the Spirit they go on, till they finiſh their courſe with joy.

By meditating upon this ſcripture the believer is ſet at liberty. Though his faith ſtaggered a little, yet the trial of it has done him good. He has learned an uſeful leſſon, and gained much experience by it. His reflections upon what has paſſed in his mind are ſuch as theſe---

O how fooliſh was I to forget the atonement and righteouſneſs of my deareſt Immanuel, in whom alone I have pardon and acceptance! How baſe was I, and ungrateful! I was tempted to expect that in myſelf, which I can have only in him. Vile legal creature that I am, I abhor myſelf for behaving ſo ill to my beſt friend. What good can I have, but what I firſt receive from him? I agree with the apoſtle, that in me, that is in my fleſh dwelleth no good thing. I am a very ſink of ſin, and of all uncleanneſs. I deſerve mercy no more than the devil does. And yet I was looking out for ſome good quality in myſelf, on account of which God might be merciful to me. Whereas I am now ſatisfied he has no mercy, but in Jeſus. All his mercies are

covenant mercies; given from mere grace, and given to miſerable ſinners---not to make them ſelf-admirers, but to humble them---not to lead them to think that they can bring God in debt to them for his own gifts, or for the right uſe of them, which is a freſh gift---but he gives all to the praiſe of the glory of his grace. He delighteth in mercy; and my caſe required mercy. It was ſuch as his mercy could get all the honor of relieving. Therefore I ought in the hour of temptation to have truſted in his mercy, to have hoped in his mercy in time of trouble, and to have loved him for his mercy in time of miſery. Here ſhould my faith have directed its eye, and not to any good which I have done, or can do. I ſhould have remembered, how it was with the election of grace, and with the veſſels of mercy. God has one way of dealing with them all. Not by works of righteouſneſs which they have done, but according to his mercy he ſaveth them, freely, fully, eternally. All is from his own good will, from firſt to laſt. Every motive, which inclines him to do good to any ſinner, is not excited by what the ſinner does or is, but ariſes from himſelf. And when he beſtows any good, it never is deſerved, but is entirely an act of ſovereign grace, flowing from the Father's love, out of the Son's fulneſs, by the influence of the holy Spirit; and is given and continued to magnify and exalt the mercy of the eternal Three. O how did I

dishonour the divine perfections by giving way to legal hopes, and by supposing that the divine will would be governed by my more or less deservings? Where should I be, if I had my deservings? God forgive me. I see mine error. I am humbled for it, and I repent with shame and sorrow. I hope my past misconduct will prove a blessing to me: For it has certainly taught me to trust less to myself, and more to the word of God; to depend less upon my own doings, and more upon free grace promises. To the word which cannot be broken, I would trust in time of need. Whoever trusts in it shall never be confounded. This I know to be true by happy experience. I will therefore read, and hear, and study it night and day. By means of it the Lord wrought a great deliverance for me. My feet were almost gone, my treadings had well nigh slipt; but he sent out his word and saved me. I read and believed, that the Father was not reconciled to me for the goodness of my walk, but that reconciliation was planned in the great covenant before all worlds, and was carried into execution by the life and death of Immanuel; it was his peculiar, his glorious, his incommunicable work; it was his sole prerogative to make peace by the blood of his cross. O that I may be enabled to maintain it the next time my faith is tried, and to put honor and glory upon the divine record concerning it. I read

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and believed, that the Father does not love me upon account of my walk, but for his mercies ſake. His mercy was towards me from everlaſting. He loved me in his Son---choſe me---accepted me in the beloved--and all his dealings with me, ſince he called me by his grace, have come from the tender mercies of a covenant God and Father. I would not henceforth have one doubt of his being reconciled to me, and of his loving me perfectly in Jeſus. My faith herein has been confirmed by my late trials. I have learned by experience to rely upon what God has ſpoken, for preſerving his peace in my conſcience and his love in my heart. Depending on his faithful word, and mighty arm, I would walk with him this day for the ſtrengthening and increaſing of thoſe graces. This is the deſire and prayer of my ſoul.

O Father of mercies, hear me for Jeſu's ſake. I acknowledge my ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs, even in my cloſeſt walk with thee. I am leſs than the leaſt of thy mercies: yea, deſerving the heavieſt of thy vengeance. It is of the Lord's mercy, that it has not fallen upon me long ago, and I truſt in his word, that it will never fall upon me. Who is a God like nnto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of thine heritage? Thou retaineſt not thine anger, againſt them for ever: becauſe thou delighteſt in mercy. Glory be to thee for thine unſpeakable mercies: for thou haſt

haſt given me faith in the atonement of Jeſus, by whom I have peace with thee my reconciled God, and by whom I have experienced thy great love to me. On thee, O my God, is ſtill my hope. I look up to thee the giver of thoſe graces for ſtrength to maintain them in my daily walk. I do believe in the ſacrifice and righteouſneſs of Immanuel, Lord help mine unbelief. I find it hard to preſerve in my practice, what I believe to be true in doctrine: And therefore on thy preſent help I muſt continually depend. Lord ſtrengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man againſt temptations. I am daily and hourly called upon to exerciſe my faith, and when thy grace does not hold me up, I fall. The fiery darts of ſatan eaſily inflame me, when they are thrown at my legal hopes, falſe dependencies, or ſelf righteous tempers. My ſhield, which ſhould quench them, is ready to drop out of mine hand. I ſhould fall a prey to the enemy, and the fire would conſume me, if thy mercy was not over me for good. O my God and Father, ſtrengthen my faith againſt the wiles and aſſaults of ſatan, and againſt the workings of mine own unbelief. When theſe trials come, keep me ſenſible of my weakneſs, and dependent on thy promiſed ſtrength, that I may meet them ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of thy might. O let every trial teach me more of thy peace in my conſcience, and more of thy love in

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my heart, that I may keep on in a ſteady courſe, walking humbly with my God. This is the work of thy good Spirit. I cannot preſerve, nor improve his graces, unleſs he be every moment preſent with me. He is the giver, the continuer, the increaſer of them all. O God the holy Ghoſt, I therefore beſeech thee to water thy graces every moment. Leſt any hurt them, keep them night and day. Never leave me, nor forſake me, but what thou haſt graciouſly begun, that mightily carry on, in my ſoul. Temptations are ſtrong, and I am weak; ſtand by me in the hour of need. And if my faith be tried with fiery temptations, let it come out of them, like gold out of the fire. O thou almighty Spirit, confirm by trials, improve by experience, my truſt in thy promiſed help. Let me go on from faith to faith. Keep up the confidence of my rejoicing in my reconciled God and loving Father, that I may walk humbly with him in ſweet communion, and holy fellowſhip in the way everlaſting. Grant me theſe mercies, gracious Father, for thy dear Son's ſake, by the influence of the eternal Spirit, three perſons in one Jehovah, to whom be equal praiſe for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

The believer orders his ſteps according to the word, walking with a free heart in the king's high-way of obedience.

MEDITATE, O my ſoul, upon the wonders, which divine love hath wrought for thee and for thy ſalvation. Review the many, many mercies of thy paſt life; and conſider, that thou art called upon to walk this day with THY God. What a privilege is this! He is thy God, and thou art his adopted Son. O what an high honor has he conferred upon thee! He has taken thee into the moſt noble family, yea, into the divine houſhold of faith. He has permitted thee to walk with him as thy Father. He has appointed the way, promiſed to be with thee in it, and every moment and at every ſtep to be doing thee good. There can be no happineſs ſuperior to this on earth. Prize it: For it is ineſtimable. Enjoy it: For it is heaven begun. Walking with God by faith is preſent enjoyment of him, and will infallibly bring thee to the end of thy journey, to full and everlaſting enjoyment.

Hold faſt then the confidence of thy rejoicing. What thou haſt been taught by the holy Spirit, depend upon him for confirming and eſtabliſhing.

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He has enabled thee to ſee the glory of the finiſhed ſalvation of Jeſus, and to believe the divine record concerning it. Thou haſt renounced every thing for the pardon of thy ſins, but the blood-ſhedding of the Lamb, and every thing for acceptance, but the Lord our righteouſneſs. Thy faith herein has been tried, and the trial ended well. Thy temptations were manifold and violent, but they have done thee good. They have ſhewed thee the neceſſity of depending upon the perfect work of the God-man----of rejoicing wholly in Chriſt Jeſus, and of having no confidence in the fleſh. They have alſo been the means of convincing thee, that thou ſtandeſt by faith. Be not high-minded then, but fear. And let thy fear of thyſelf lead thee to truſt more in God. Rely on his faithful arm to maintain and to carry on his own work in thy ſoul. Remember, he has promiſed it. Thy ſufficiency is of God, and he has engaged to give thee grace ſufficient for thee. He has undertaken, as a Father, to ſupply all thy wants, to deliver thee from all miſeries, and to with-hold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Thy ſalvation is ſafe. It reſts upon a ſure foundation, as ſure as the covenant of the day and the covenant of the night. Theſe ſucceed each other by the will of their creator, and have not been out of courſe not one ſingle moment. The ordinances of day and night are regular and certain. So certain is thy

thy ſalvation by the ſame unerring will. While the belief of this rules in thy conſcience, and in thy heart thou wilt be able to reſiſt temptations. None of them will overcome thee, unleſs they ſeparate between thee and thy God. Nay they will work for thy good, if guilty fears do not wreſt the ſhield of faith out of thine hand. O beg of God to keep thee and thy faith in the hour of trial, that thou mayeſt experience his faithfulneſs to his word. If thou put honor upon it, according to thy faith ſo ſhall it be done unto thee. Give it credit, and thy ſteps will be ordered aright. Thou wilt walk in love this day, as God hath loved thee. He will be thy portion, and the way in which he is to be enjoyed will be thy delight.

Set out then in this faith, with peace in thy conſcience, and love in thy heart—truſting to thy God and Father. Look up to him for ſtrength to maintain and to increaſe theſe graces. And hope to receive it from his faithfulneſs. Now he has put a new ſong in thy mouth, even praiſe unto thy God, go on thy way believing and rejoicing. Jeſus is thine with all his fulneſs. And he has promiſed thee a conſtant ſupply of the Spirit, that thou mayeſt have grace for grace to enable thee to walk humbly with thy God.

Mind then, thy walk is to be ordered according to his revealed will, and in his appointed

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way of obedience to it; For all rational creatures are bound to obey God. As ſoon as he makes known his will to them, it becomes their indiſpenſible duty. His will is one, like himſelf, unchangeably the ſame, yeſterday, to-day, and for ever: For when revealed by the ſovereign creator it becomes to mankind a law, which altereth not. It binds angels and men every moment, in every point and circumſtance. And its obligation will never ceaſe. For all his commandments are ſure, they ſtand faſt for ever and ever. What he has commanded is as fixt as the ſun before him. It ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witneſs in heaven.

It pleaſed the ſovereign creator to enforce this holy, juſt and good law by proper ſanctions. Out of his mere grace he has promiſed life to obedience, which man engaged to perform: And he threatened death to diſobedience, to which penalty man ſubmitted. Thereby this law became a covenant of works. The promiſe was to him, who ſhould continue obedient in all things: for Moſes deſcribeth the righteouſneſs which is of the law, that the man who fulfilleth thoſe things ſhall live by them. But if he does not fulfil them perfectly, without one failing, he then comes under the penalty, which God had threatened to diſobedience—" Curſed is he who " continueth not in all things, that are written

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in the book of the law to do them:" This curſe draws after it all the pains and penalties of the broken law in earth and in hell.

Under this law of works Adam was placed, and under it all his deſcendents are born. He and they are bound to keep the law in their own perſons, if they would receive the promiſe, or liable to ſuffer the penalty, if they tranſgreſs. Adam broke the law of works, and we all in him; For in him all have ſinned. We were all in his loins, when he fell, and forfeited in his attainder. By the offence of that one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. The righteous judge paſſed the ſentence, and decreed, that by the law of works no fleſh living ſhould be ſaved: For he has proved in his word both Jews and Gentiles to be under the law, and under ſin, which is the tranſgreſſion of it. Whereby every mouth is ſtopped, and all the world is become guilty before God: Therefore by the deeds of the law, there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight.

In the law of works there was no proviſion made for a ſurety; but it did not abſolutely exclude one: Therefore it left room for the covenant of grace, in which a proviſion was made in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt for ſecuring the divine honor of this holy law. He undertook to ſtand up in man's place and ſtead to magnify the precepts of the law in his life, and to glorify the penalties

penalties of the law in his death, that not one jot or tittle of it might fail till all was fulfilled. And as he was God over all, bleſſed for ever, his life and death put everlaſting honor upon the divine law. His obedience was of ineſtimable value, and his ſufferings were infinitely ſufficient to take away ſin. Chriſt is now the end of the law for righteouſneſs. He anſwered the end of the law for his people by obeying and ſuffering for them: And every one of them can now plead by faith a perfect fulfilling of all the precepts, a perfect ſuffering of all the penalties in the perſon of their divine ſurety. God the Father is faithful and juſt to his word and engagements with his Son: He has made known his will in the immutable record of his grace, "that whoſoever believeth in Jeſus ſhould not periſh, "but ſhould have everlaſting life." How can he periſh? Jeſus died for him. He ſhall live with God in everlaſting life: Becauſe Jeſus lived for him. And this is the declared will of the Father concerning all that believe in his only begotten Son.

Remember then, O my ſoul, that thou art not under the law, but under grace. Thou art ſaved from the law, under the form of a covenant of works. Thou art not bound to keep its precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience, nor yet to ſuffer its penalties for thy diſobedience. Thy ſurety undertook to act and ſuffer for thee.

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He was to anſwer the law in its commands and demands to every jot and tittle. And he did. Whatever it required, whatever it threatened was perfectly fulfilled in the perſon of thy God and Saviour: And he has abſolutely diſcharged thee from it, as a law of works. Thou art to have nothing to do with it in that view; nay, he has forbidden thee to keep it in hopes that thou mayeſt live thereby. The irreverſible decree entered in the records of heaven has enacted---BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED. Thou art now to look upon the law in the matter of juſtifying and giving life; as a woman looks upon her dead huſband. She is freed from the marriage contract with him, and may now give her heart and hand to another: So art thou freed from the bond of the legal covenant. Thou art become dead to the law by the body of Chriſt, who has eſpouſed and betrothed thee to himſelf, that ſerving him in newneſs of ſpirit and not in the oldneſs of the letter, thou mayeſt bring forth fruit unto God. This is thy high privilege. Thy firſt huſband is dead: happy for thee, thou art lawfully married to another---Thy huſband is thy maker, Jehovah of hoſts is his name. The word made fleſh has paid all thy debts, ſuffered thy puniſhment, wrought out a perfect righteouſneſs, and won a crown of perfect glory for thee. O what a divine honor has he put upon thee! Thou

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art now one with Immanuel in a bond of everlaſting love. He has given himſelf to thee, with all he has and all he is; and it is thy happineſs now, not to be thine own, but the Lord's---not to follow thine own will, but his. The law of thy Lord is liberty. As taught by his ſpirit, and performed by faith it is perfect freedom. Whilſt thou walkeſt with him in obedinece to it, and leaneſt on thy beloved every ſtep, thou wilt find deliverance from all ſpiritual tyranny and bondage, and wilt enjoy the light of his countenance, and the love of his heart. When the Son has thus made thee free, thou art free indeed---free, now thy heart is ſet at liberty to run with Jeſus in the way of his commandments.

In this view, O my ſoul, thou canſt look with delight at the moſt holy law. Attend to it cloſely, and ſtudy it carefully. In order to obey, as a chriſtian, theſe following conſiderations ſhould be well underſtood and digeſted: becauſe under the influence of them every ſtep of thy walk is to be ordered. O pray then for the ſpirit of wiſdom to teach thee practically:

Firſt, that thy walk with God in the way of obedience is not to fulfil the law, as a covenant of works. Thou art not required to do this. Thou canſt not do it. Immanuel, thy divine ſurety, took it upon himſelf. Becauſe it was impoſſible for thee, a fallen creature, to keep the law,

law, ſo as to be juſtified by it, he therefore came in perſon to fulfil it. He honoured its precepts by his infinite obedience. He magnified its penalties by his ineſtimable ſacrifice. And this is thy juſtifying righteouſneſs. Through faith in the life and death of the God-man, thou art not only freed from guilt and condemnation, from curſe and hell, but art alſo intitled to life and glory. The law is now on thy ſide, and is become thy friend. It acquits thee. It juſtifies thee. It will give thee the reward promiſed to obedience. The law in the hand of thy Saviour has nothing but bleſſings to beſtow upon thee. Thou art to receive it at his mouth and to obey him: But not from any legal hopes of heaven, or from any ſlaviſh fears of hell: for then thou wouldſt come under the covenant of works again. Whereas thou art not under the law, but under grace: Mind thy privilege, and pray for grace to live up to it. Thou art not under the law, bound to keep it perfectly in thine own perſon, or in caſe of failing condemned by it, and under its fearful curſe: but thou art under grace, a ſtate of grace, through faith in the obedience and ſufferings of thy bleſſed ſurety, and under the power of grace, ſweetly inclining thee to love, and mightily enabling thee to keep the law of the Lord thy God. Live thus by grace, and ſin ſhall not have dominion over thee. Under the reign of

of grace, the tyrant ſin is always dethroned. Obey under grace, as freely and fully ſaved by faith in Jeſus, and this will make thy walk eaſy and evangelical: Thou wilt go on with a free ſpirit, and wilt delight thyſelf in the ways of God, walking with him

2. By faith, and not by ſight. This is the great ſpring of all goſpel obedience. Faith has an univerſal efficacy: for thus it is written—"Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God." He is not pleaſed with the thing done, but with the principle on which it is done. He looks at the heart. Hearing the word, or ſaying prayers, or giving alms, or doing any thing commanded, are not pleaſing in themſelves; but they muſt be performed upon a right motive, and to a right end. And both theſe come from faith. The apoſtle mentions the motive, which had influenced every ſtep of his chriſtian courſe, "We "walk by faith, and not by ſight"—we judge of our ſtate by what God ſays of it, and we order our walk accordingly. We give credit to his witneſs of our being pardoned and juſtified freely by grace through faith, and we depend for the truth of this not on what we ſee, but on what we believe. We truſt not on our good frames, or warm feelings, or ſenſible comforts, or to any of the genuine fruits and effects of faith, but we truſt what God ſays ſimply, as his record: and therefore we walk in a conſtant dependence on

the truth of God in his word, and upon the faithfulneſs of God to his word. Some promiſed grace we ſtand in need of every ſtep; and we rely upon his word, which cannot be broken, and upon his faithfulneſs, which cannot fail. Thus we go on, and we find the promiſe made good, according to our faith.

Such was the apoſtle's walk. And is thine directed by the ſame motive? Search, O my ſoul, and examine upon what principle thou goeſt to duty. Is it in the obedience of faith? Doſt thou take no ſtep without the warrant of the word of God? Doſt thou give full credit to what God ſays in it of thy ſtate, as a juſtified perſon? And does this appear from thy dependence upon his faithfulneſs to make good every thing promiſed to them, who are in that ſtate? Bleſſed art thou of the Lord, if thou art walking by this faith. O praiſe his holy name, who has thus highly favored thee, and aſcribe to him all the glory. So will thy end be right, as well as thy motive. True faith takes no honor to itſelf. It is an emptying humbling grace. Its ſpring-head is in covenant love, and it is given from diſtinguiſhing favor and ſovereign mercy. It has no foundation, when given, but the word of God: nothing to reſt on, but the divine truth: no ſupport, but the divine power: and no growth, but from the divine influence. What then does it leave a man to glory in? Whoever has it, has it all from God, and

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be diſpoſed to give God all the
Even for common mercies, as well a
will live by the faith of the Son of
ther he eats or drinks, or whatever he doe,
does all in the name of the Lord Jeſus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him. And thus he will go on ſweetly and happily, obeying, not from ſlaviſh fears or legal hopes, but

3. From holy love, which is the fruit and conſequence of walking by faith. Faith worketh love, and then worketh by love. The faith of the goſpel, as a grace of the Spirit, worketh chiefly by love to God, and to man for God's ſake: for the goſpel diſcovers the way of ſalvation, contrived by the eternal Three, fulfilled in the life and death of Immanuel, and applied to the ſinner's heart by the eternal Spirit. Whoever is enabled to believe the goſpel will ſee himſelf an object of the covenant love of the bleſſed Trinity, and will therefore love Father, Son, and Spirit: for we love him, ſays the apoſtle, becauſe he firſt loved us. And faith in his love to us will make us that we ſhall neither be barren nor unfruitful. Love is very active. Obeying from love is very ſweet. How active! How ſweet is obedience, when the love of God is ſhed abroad in the heart by the holy Ghoſt, who is given unto us! He is an almighty agent.

He overcomes the power of legal unbelieving workings, and puts a new ſpring to duty into the heart. He manifeſts the love of God in Chriſt, his free diſtinguiſhing love, the exceeding riches of it, and the numerous bleſſings flowing from it through time and eternity. In the ſenſe of theſe mercies he excites gratitude, and puts it upon acting. This grace has a wonderful influence. "What return ſhall I make unto the "Lord!" is the devout breathing of the grateful heart. While the love of Chriſt conſtraineth it, all the affections follow him, and the ſoul delights itſelf in his ways. Then none of his commandments will be grievous. Nay, his yoke itſelf becomes eaſy, and his burden light: O triumphant love! How active, how ſweet did he find it, who cried out—"I can do ALL things, I "can ſuffer ALL things, I am more than con-"queror, through him that loveth me."

And is not this, O my ſoul, thy happy caſe? O prize thy privilege, and adorn it in thy life. Walk in love with thy reconciled God, and out of love to him perform all duties, and bear all croſſes. Remember, thou art not required to obey, in order to be ſaved for thine obedience, but thou art already ſaved; and therefore out of gratitude to thy deareſt Saviour, thou art bound to love him and to obey him. Thou canſt not love his perſon, and yet hate his will. "If ye love me, ſays he, "keep my commandments"—give this proof of it,

it, keep in my way, doing my commandments. But whatever ye do, let it come from the heart. Obey me, but ſee it be with a willing mind, and with a free ſpirit. When all ſprings from love, then my ſervice will be perfect freedom. I would have you to do my will, but without fear; not for life; but from life; not that ye may live, but becauſe ye live. Do it, as ſons, and not as ſlaves: the ſlave abideth not in the houſe for ever, but the ſon abideth for ever. In this free ſpirit of adoption ſerve me, as ſons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with me. Stand faſt therefore in the liberty, wherewith I have made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

To obey from life and ſalvation received and enjoyed is ſweet liberty. To obey, as the condition of life and ſalvation is bitter ſlavery: it is an intolerable yoke, becauſe it is not poſſible any fallen man ſhould ſo keep the law, as to live thereby. But the believer freed from this condition by Chriſt's keeping the law for him is in liberty, he is ſaved from the penalty annexed to the tranſgreſſion; he is entitled to the life promiſed to obedience, and thereby he is delivered from legal hopes and from guilty fears. In this faith he walks on delightfully in the ways of obedience: for he is reconciled to the law through the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus: he loves it. O what love, ſays he, have I unto

unto thy law! Becauſe now I find it according to promiſe written upon my heart. And this is a

4. Motive to goſpel obedience. The new covenant runs thus—" I will put, ſays God, my " law in their inward parts, and write it in their " hearts, and I will be their God, and they ſhall " be my people: and they ſhall teach no more " every man his neighbour, and every man his " brother, ſaying, know the Lord: for they ſhall " all know me from the leaſt of them to the " greateſt of them." The heart is by nature as hard as adamant. It is enmity itſelf againſt the holy law. But the Lord here engages to take away the ſtony heart, and to give an heart of fleſh, upon which he will write the ten commandments; not in tables of ſtone, but in the fleſhly tables of the heart. The Spirit of the living God will teach all his children to know their Father, he will manifeſt to them their adoption, he will reveal to them their Father's love in Jeſus, and he will make their hearts happy in the enjoyment of it. Then the holy fruits of this love will appear towards man. It will work ſweetly in benevolence, and effectually in beneficence. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the ſelfiſh, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the holy Spirit teaches brotherly love he overcomes all oppoſition to it. He ſays to his diſciples

diſciples—" Be ye kind one to another, tender-
" hearted, forgiving one another, even as God
" for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you," And he makes them kind one to another: they ſhew it by every good word and work. Thus by manifeſting to them the Father reconciled in Jeſus, and by enabling them to love man for his ſake, he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets. The love of God, ſays the apoſtle to the Romans, is ſhed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghoſt, and to the Theſſalonians, ye yourſelves are taught of God to love one another. Thus he engages the affections of the ſoul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceaſeth to be a yoke and a burden. How eaſy is it to do what one loves? If you dearly love any perſon, what a pleaſure is it to ſerve him? What will not love put you upon doing or ſuffering to oblige him? Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleaſantneſs. The ſoul will run, yea, inſpired by love, it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments.

Happy are the people, that are in ſuch a caſe! And is it not, O my ſoul, in ſome meaſure thine? Haſt thou not been taught to love God, and his ways? Since thou haſt been acquainted with him as thy loving Father in Jeſus, has not thy faith been

been working by love to him, and to his will, and to his whole houſehold and family? Remember this is promiſed. All the children of God are to be taught to know and to love their heavenly Father. This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace, which the almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil. And he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements. O truſt him then, and put honor upon his faithfulneſs. He has promiſed to guide thee with his counſel, and to ſtrengthen thee with his might in the way of obedience to thy reconciled God. What is within thee, or without thee to oppoſe thy walking in love with him he will incline thee to reſiſt, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayeſt thou not expect from ſuch a divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpoſe to keep thy heart right with God. What can he not do, what will he not do for thee? Such as is the love of the Father and of the Son, ſuch is the love of the Holy Ghoſt, the ſame free, perfect, everlaſting love. Read his promiſes of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increaſing faith to mix with them; that he, dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayeſt have fellowſhip there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the holy Spirit to ſubdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever

grace

grace is to be received out of the fulneſs of Jeſus in order to keep up and to promote that communion, intreat the holy Spirit to give it thee with growing ſtrength. But pray in faith nothing wavering. So ſhall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou ſhalt be like the ſun, when it goeth forth in its might, ſhining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. O may thy courſe be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be anſwered, and that the will of thy Father may be done in earth, as it is done in heaven.

When all theſe things concur, what can be wanting to make the way of obedience eaſy and pleaſant? It is not now an hard burden, impoſſible to be borne. The Spirit of life which is in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made it eaſy. He has reconciled the believer to the law: for he ſhews it to him in his ſurety, magnified and made honorable---magnified infinitely in his life---made everlaſtingly honorable in his death: ſo that the Father can get the fulleſt glory to every divine perfection, even to his juſtice, by ſaving ſinners through faith in the righteouſneſs of his Son: he can be juſt, and yet the juſtifier of the ungodly. The believer perſuaded of this is reconciled to God. Being no longer under the law, as a covenant of works, but under grace, he loves the law, and walks with God in ſweet obedience

to

to it. He ſets out, and goes on every ſtep, in faith---truſting to the acceptance of his perſon, and of his ſervices in the beloved. He does not work now, in order to be ſaved; but he works, becauſe he is ſaved. And he aſcribes all he does to the praiſe of the glory of free grace. He works from gratitude, and the faith of God's elect always does. It never fails to ſhew itſelf by love. The holy Spirit wins the heart by revealing to it the love of God, and thereby draws out the affections after him. When the commandment comes, "My ſon, give me thy heart." The ſon is ready, "Lord, take it, and ſeal it "thine for ever." And whatever inbred enmity may remain againſt giving it to the Lord, the holy Spirit has undertaken to ſubdue it. It is his office to take away the ſtony heart, and to create an heart of fleſh, ſoft and willing to receive the impreſſion of this grace. With the ſame finger, which once wrote the holy law upon tables of ſtone, it is now written upon the fleſhly tables of the heart. And then the love of God, and the love of man are clearly taught, and effectually enforced. What a change does this make in obedience! Hard things are now done with eaſe. Rough ways are made ſmooth. Painful things become delightful. The labor of love is ſweet labor: becauſe the heart is in it. The feet run; the hands work: all the faculties are ready

ready to exert themſelves, when love commands.

O my God, let it be thus with me. Thou haſt given me an earneſt deſire to walk with thee in thy ways, guide me in them by thine almighty Spirit. Let him abide with me, holy Father, as the Spirit of adoption, that I may always ſerve thee, as thy reconciled child, not under the law, but under grace. I would gladly walk with thee every ſtep by faith, and that faith working by love to thee and to my whole will. O God, give me grace ſufficient for thy holy walk. Let thy faithful promiſe be daily fulfilled: write thy law ſtill plainer in mine inward parts, and let it be more fairly copied out in my life. I want to love thee more, as thou knoweſt. O my God, keep my heart ſenſible of the exceeding riches of thy love to me, and let the growing ſenſe of this increaſe mine to thee. In the ſtrength of thy good Spirit enable me to overcome inward and outward oppoſition to my walking with thee in love. Let him ſtrengthen me mightily in the inner man for every labor of love. From him cometh power to embrace and to cleave with full purpoſe of heart unto the ways of God---to love what he loves---and to hate what he hates. O thou bleſſed Spirit of the Father and of the Son make me willing, keep me able to enjoy the Father's love in his Son: and let it be a growing love,

love, abounding yet more and more in knowledge, and in all ſenſible feeling, that I may run and not be weary, may be going on to the end and not be faint. Even ſo. Let it be done unto thy ſervant according to thy word, wherein thou haſt cauſed me to put my truſt. Let me have fellowſhip with the Father in his love through the ſalvation of his Son by thine influence upon my heart, now, henceforth and for ever. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

The walk of the believer in the way of duty.

IT is very hard to go on in a ſtraight courſe and for any length of time. The hinderances are many. To underſtand the nature and obligations of duty, to enter upon it with right motives, to perform it in a proper temper; to go through it without backwardneſs or wearineſs, not by conſtraint, but willingly, and to find the true end of doing it anſwered, theſe are great difficulties: But they will be removed in ſome meaſure out of the believer's walk; if he attend to what was ſaid before of obedience in general, and if he be enabled to bring it into practice.

It cannot be too often repeated, that the true believer is not under the law, as a covenant of works---bound to keep the precept for life, or liable to the penalty of death. He is not under the law in this reſpect, but under grace. He is one with Chriſt, who kept the precept, and ſuffered the penalty for him, as his ſurety, and in his ſtead. He has put in his plea, and taken the benefit of Chriſt's ſuretyſhip. His plea has been admitted; and therefore he is in a ſtate of perfect

fect acceptance. He ſtands in the liberty where-with Chriſt hath made him free. Grace reigns in him, and over him, and renders his obedience perfect freedom. He obeys, but it is all in faith. He works, but it is from a ſenſe of the Father's love to him in his Son. Gratitude taught by the holy Spirit influences his heart and life. His heart has the love of God written upon it, and his life manifeſts it. He ſerves God with a thankful mind and without fear, and cheerfully does all the good he can to man for God's ſake.

The believer will never get on in the way of duty, unleſs he learns to obey upon theſe goſpel principles. He will ſtand in need of their aſſiſtance at every ſtep: For he will meet with conſtant oppoſition to them. The fleſh will not come under grace. The carnal mind is always legal. The old man of ſin knows nothing but working for life, and will not ſubmit to any other way. Our ſinful nature is altogether for the covenant of works. Jews, Turks, heathens, and nominal chriſtians are all upon one plan: they expect God will be merciful to them for their doings. And the children of God are exerciſed with this ſelf-righteous ſpirit more or leſs all their days. Is it not, O my ſoul, thy grief and burden? Art thou not daily plagued with it in thy duties? And though thy principles be very evangelical,

yet they too often fail thee in practice. O beg of God then, earneſtly and often, that thou mayeſt be caſt into the mould of the goſpel, quite evangelized in thy mind, and mayeſt perform all duties upon ſuch motives, as he himſelf requires and approves.

Duty is a debt owing to God---due from the creature to the creator. The obligation to it ariſes from the abſolute dependence of the one upon the other; and it conſiſts in acknowledging this in the appointed way by a perfect and continual ſervice of every faculty---the creature being entirely ſubject to the will of the creator, and living in never-failing conformity to it: for the will of God doth bind all men on earth, and angels and glorified ſpirits in heaven. It is an unchangeable law obliging for ever all creatures to obedience, not only on account of the matter contained in it, but alſo with reſpect to the ſovereign authority of the almighty law-giver. And this obligation Chriſt in the goſpel has not in the leaſt diſſolved, but on all occaſions has confirmed and ſtrengthened. How deciſive are theſe words? "Think not that I am come to deſtroy the law "and the prophets, I am not come to deſtroy, "but to fulfil," to fulfil the law in mine own perſon, as the ſurety for my people, and to put the love of it into their hearts, and to engage them, and to enable them to practice it in their lives:

lives: though not for the ſame end, for which I fulfilled it.

Duty is always one and the ſame---a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the death of ſuffering being incurred, the believer is taught to plead his diſcharge from ſuffering under Chriſt, and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. With this faith he has a delightful proſpect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the ſenſe of thoſe diſtinguiſhing favors. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honor is this! Having received the adoption of ſons, he is bleſſed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowſhip with him. What a happineſs is this! "Son, all that I have "is thine, it is freely given to thee in Jeſus, and "thou art now called upon to enjoy me and "mine in thy holy walk." Here duty becomes his privilege. It is exalted and ſpiritualized into a goſpel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleaſing bonds of gratitude tie his heart to obedience, to a free, holy, evangelical obedience. He obeys, not as a ſlave, but as a ſon---not for fear, but becauſe Chriſt has ſet him at liberty---not that God may accept, pardon and juſtify him, but becauſe God has done all for him and will do all in him---not that he may have heaven for his obedience, but becauſe

heaven is reſerved for him, and he for it. He therefore looks at duty, as greatly refined by the goſpel. Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowſhip with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit every act brings the Father's love through the Son's ſalvation into experience. He has communion with his God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raiſed to a divine honor: For it is hereby made, to them who are in Chriſt, the higheſt privilege they can have on this ſide of heaven.

When the holy Spirit writes the law upon the heart, he then teaches this obedience of faith. He does not aboliſh duty, but he enforces it upon right motives, and directs it to a right end. The ſame duties remain in the goſpel, but not upon the ſame obligation. Law duties, as conditions of life, cannot be fulfilled. The judge himſelf has decreed, that by the works of the law there ſhall no fleſh be juſtified in his ſight. Therefore the law as a covenant of works does not enter into the believer's obedience. He obeys, becauſe he is freed from this covenant--not freed from doing the ſame duties, which this covenant required, but freed from doing them upon law motives, neither expecting the promiſed life on account of keeping the precepts, nor fearing the threatened penalty on account of not keeping them. It is his privilege to obey, becauſe he is ſaved. He works from a free ſpirit, and with a

thankful heart. He does all his duties in faith. He is ſpiritual in them, acting upon the endearing motive of God's love to him in Chriſt, as it has been revealed to his heart by the holy Spirit. He hopes for the acceptance of them only through the interceſſion of Chriſt: And after he has done them ever ſo well, he deſires grace from Chriſt to return him all his glory. Thus in every duty he aims at fellowſhip with God in Chriſt through the Spirit, and ſeeks to preſent an odor of a ſweet ſmell, a ſacrifice, acceptable, well pleaſing to God.

Whatever thou art required to do, remember, O my ſoul, that thou art under grace, and it is thy privilege to do it in faith. View the two tables in the hand of thy Saviour, and receive the ten commandments from his mouth. Happy for thee, Jeſus is thy law-giver. His ſpirit will goſpelize thine obedience. He will bring thine heart into it. He will ſet thee in the chariot of love, and thou ſhalt ride on proſperouſly: He will oil the wheels of duty, and they ſhall run eaſy and pleaſant. Thou ſhalt be carried ſweetly through duty, thy beloved being preſent and converſing with thee in it: yea thy faith working by love to him will render fellowſhip with God in all thou doeſt the joy of thy heart and the glory of thy life.

O beg of thy divine teacher thus to ſpiritualize thine obedience. From him only canſt thou learn

learn the two great commandments, which are the ſum and ſubſtance of the will of thy God. In the firſt his nature is revealed, and then his worſhip. He is the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy Alehim; Jehovah means the ſelf-exiſtent Godhead, and Alehim, the perſons in covenant, Father, Son and Spirit, partakers of the ſame ſelf-exiſtence, and divine glory, without any difference, or inequality. There can be no true religion without the true object of worſhip, and he cannot be worſhipped, unleſs he be known; therefore it is an indiſpenſable duty to know the Lord God. But how ſhall fallen man attain to this knowledge? He loſt it by ſin, and he cannot by any reaſoning faculty or power of his own recover it. It is a matter of fact, that no man did ever by ſearching find out God. And atteſted by infallible authority, that the world by its wiſdom knew not God. There is no true deſcription of the Godhead, but what is revealed in ſcripture; and it is altogether from the teaching of the holy Spirit, that any one ſavingly underſtands what is revealed. He the Spirit of wiſdom and revelation opens the eyes of the mind, ſets the object before them, and gives a clear idea of it. He takes of the things of God, and ſhews them to his diſciples. He does not lead them into abſtracted reaſonings about the divine nature, or what the abſolute Godhead is, but his leſſons are uſeful and practical. He

teaches the knowledge of the perſons in Jehovah, as they are related to ſinners in the covenant of grace. Through him the Father is made known, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, by "whom we cry, Abba, Father," *Rom.* viii. 15. Through him the Son is believed in: for no man can ſay, that Jeſus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghoſt. He diſcovers the Father's love in the Son with its rich graces and abundant bleſſings, as it is written we have "received, not the ſpi-"rit of the world, but the Spirit which is of "God, that we might know the things that are "freely given to us of God." He makes known the giver, and the gifts, and he is received for that very purpoſe. He ſhines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. And this is ſaving acquaintance with the Father and with the Son; For hereby the underſtanding is reſtored to the image of God; and the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

O what a mercy is this! What can call for greater praiſe! And this mercy, O my ſoul, is thine. Unſpeakably gracious has the Lord been to thee. He has given thee the knowledge of himſelf. His image is upon thine underſtanding. His light is ſhining upon it; certainly it is as great an act, as when he firſt commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs: for hereby I be-

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lieve in him, I know him to be my FATHER. O precious name! The love of his heart, and it is infinite: the bleſſings of his love, and they are numberleſs, he has called me to enjoy, freely, of mere grace, of his own ſovereign good will---called me to the adoption of ſons, to the nobleſt dignity, yea to everlaſting honor, to be a ſon of the moſt high God---God is my Father---my new-birth is from him---that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit, and has fellowſhip with the Father of ſpirits. Behold! what manner of love this is! No parent ever loved, or can love a child as my Father which is in heaven loves me. And I deſire in the ſenſe of this to love him, to cleave to him with full purpoſe of heart, and gratefully to devote all I have and am to his ſervice and to his glory. O thou divine revealer of this love enlighten mine underſtanding and influence my affections, that I may grow in the knowledge of my Father in Jeſus: For

In him the Father only is to be known. He is his Father, as our covenant head, and therefore ours in him. God is not a Father to any, but in Chriſt. The name Father reſpects Chriſt, as the firſt-begotten, and then all his ſeed. He is the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, and depends for its adoption on the Father of their Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He undertook to be made man, to live and to die for the many ſons,

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whom he was to bring to glory: and in conſequence of his undertakings it pleaſed the Father to lay up all fulneſs of grace for them in the God-man, their covenant head. And it pleaſes the Spirit to witneſs of this fulneſs, and to enable believers to receive out of it grace for grace. Thus he reveals Immanuel to them. They know him, and are one with him. He is their Lord and their God, and by faith they live in him and upon him. Truſting to his atonement and righteouſneſs they have peace with their reconciled Father, and they enjoy his love ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt. Waiting in the appointed ways they grow in the knowledge of the wonderful perſon God-Jeſus. They ſee more of the divine glory of his ſalvation work, and by depending on it daily they enjoy more of the things which accompany ſalvation. Thrice happy are they, whoſe acquaintance with Jeſus is thus increaſing. Their happineſs has a boundleſs ſubject. They may ſtudy on, and they will find in him new worlds of delight to eternity. O ye highly favored, read and adore the wonders already wrought for you; among which theſe are not the leaſt: "We know that the "Son of God is come, and hath given us an "underſtanding to know him that is true, and "we are in him that is true, even in his Son "Jeſus Chriſt, who is the true God and eternal "life." Bleſſed knowledge! they have an underſtanding

derſtanding given them, and they are ſavingly acquainted with the Father and with the Son by the teaching of the Holy Ghoſt. Jehovah is their Alehim. Thus they learn the firſt part of their duty, which leads them to the

Second, Namely to love the perſons in the Godhead, becauſe they ſtand in this moſt endearing relation to them. They love the Father, who is their Father in Jeſus. They have not only heard of, and believed in, but have alſo enjoyed his precious love. It has been ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt? who has overcome all reſiſtance to his love; yea has made enmity itſelf yield to it. Having purified the conſcience by faith, he then purifies the heart: He pours into it a ſenſe of that love, which gave his co-equal Son for them, and all the bleſſings in earth and in heaven with him. Thereby he draws out the affections in holy deſires to be more united to the Father of mercies. It is the property of love to deſire to be united to the beloved object. The holy Spirit has diſcovered the object, and has given the deſire, and he fulfils all the deſires of his own creating. He teaches all the children of God to know their Father; and to experience his love to them in his Son, and then they cannot but love him. He creates the new heart for this very purpoſe; and makes it ſenſible that the Father's love is all received through the Son,

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and therefore the Father and the Son are beloved with an undivided affection.

The Son is his office name. It ſhould never be heard without putting us in mind of the wonderful love of our God in his undertakings. He covenanted to be made fleſh. What a miracle of love is that! He engaged with his Father to be the ſurety for his people, to do their work, to ſuffer their puniſhment, and then God and man, one Chriſt for ever, was to have all fulneſs of covenant bleſſings to give his people. The Father has no love, the Spirit beſtows no grace, but what comes through Chriſt. A believer is therefore taught in every thing he does to have fellowſhip with Chriſt. His ſafety, his happineſs, his hopes of happineſs to-day and for ever are bleſſings to be received out of Immanuel's fulneſs: for he is the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all. And while the member is receiving life and ſenſe and happineſs from the fulneſs of the head, he will have freſh motives to love his divine Saviour. What can fix his affections, if gratitude to Jeſus cannot? He has every thing in him, that can win the heart. He has beauty to engage love, bleſſings to increaſe love, glories to increaſe love to him for evermore. He is beauty without a rival. Whatever is charming in any earthly object is but a ray from him, and ſhould lead to him; it is but a beam

beam to point out the matchleſs graces of Immanuel. And ſo is the lovelineſs of heavenly objects: ſaints and angels have nothing beautiful, but what the love of Jeſus has put upon them. He is the Lord and giver of all their glory. How glorious then muſt he be? He is mine, ſays the believer, and my property in him makes him indeed glorious in mine eyes. Once I ſaw no beauty in him, that I ſhould deſire him; but now he is my beloved and my friend. I can ſee every thing truly lovely in my Lord and my God. Whatever elſe courts my heart appears to be but a ſhadow: the ſubſtance is my Jeſus. He endears himſelf daily to me by his numberleſs favors. I am always receiving out of his fulneſs ſome bleſſing, which makes him the centre of my happineſs. Every look of faith diſcovers in him ſome new excellency, and brings from him ſome freſh kindneſs, and thereby engages my heart ſtill more to its precious Saviour. And when I look forward to the glory to be revealed, when I ſhall ſee my deareſt Jeſus face to face, and ſhall be like him, and ſhall enjoy him, and in him all the bleſſings of the eternal Three for ever, O this is too big for preſent thought; yet it conſtrains me to give up my whole ſoul to this heavenly lover. Glorify him daily in me, thou faithful witneſs for Jeſus, and give me continual reaſon to love thee with the ſame undivided affection,

affection, wherewith thou haſt enabled me to love the Father and the Son.

The holy Spirit is Jehovah, a perſon in the ſelf-exiſtent Godhead, equal with the Father in every attribute. His office name is *Spirit*; the idea is taken from air, ſuch as we breathe, to denote his being the breather or inſpirer of ſpiritual life. Every thing done by him in this character tends to holineſs, and therefore he is called the *holy* Spirit. His office in the covenant, as well as his co-equality with the Father and the Son, entitle him to equal worſhip, and to equal love. For he undertook to carry into execution the purpoſes of the Father's love in Jeſus. Their fulfilment depends entirely upon his grace. The Son has been incarnate; he has brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and made the atonement for ſin: the Father is ſatisfied with his finiſhed work, and has demonſtrated his acceptance of it: the God-man is now upon the throne of glory with all power in heaven and earth. To this the holy Spirit bears witneſs. It is his divine office to apply the ſalvation of Jeſus, and to make it effectual. He does all *in* the heirs of promiſe. The Father gave them to the Son, the Son redeemed them, but they are in the common maſs of corruption, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, till the Spirit of life enter into them. They feel not their guilt nor their danger, till he convince them. They are quite ignorant of God and of

the things of God, till he make them wiſe unto ſalvation. They cannot believe in Jeſus, till the Spirit of faith enable them. They cannot rejoice in the Father's love, till the Comforter makes them ſenſible of it. They are without ſtrength, until they be ſtrengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man. They cannot go in their chriſtian courſe, but by a conſtant ſupply of the Spirit. They cannot hold out to the end, but from his abiding with them for ever. So that he is the Lord and giver of life. He begins the good work, and he confirms it, until the day of Jeſus Chriſt. Every motion of ſpiritual life is from him, and all thoſe, whom he makes alive, he makes ſenſible of the debt which they owe him. He manifeſts his love to them, and thereby he engages their love to him. They experience, how great the love of the Spirit is. They are ſenſible of their obligations to him, and deſire to be thankful for them. Thus their affections return to the proper object of love and worſhip. They receive daily the bleſſings of the Father's love through faith in the Son's ſalvation, by the applying power of the holy Spirit, and hereby they are reconciled to the firſt and great commandment; it is become the delight of their ſouls to love the Lord God.

Here conſider, O my ſoul, whether thou art acting upon the principle of gratitude to the God. If thou art, then his yoke will be eaſy and his

his burden light. Thou wilt not go to duty in bondage, hopeing to gain his love by the deſert of what thou doeſt, or fearing to be beaten with many ſtripes for not doing it well. Thy God whom thou ſerveſt is thy moſt loving friend, and tendereſt father. He loved thee in Jeſus, freely by grace, not by works done by thee, or to be done. Immanuel is thy Saviour: His love to thee is made up of miracles. No underſtanding of angels or of glorified ſpirits can conceive how great it is: for it paſſeth knowledge. Nevertheleſs the holy Spirit has revealed it unto thee. He loves thee, as the Father and the Son do, with the ſame divine affection. Thy debt is equal, thy gratitude ſhould be the ſame to the bleſſed Trinity. In the ſenſe of thine infinite obligations thou art called upon to walk in the way of duty. Love to the perſon, whom thou art to ſerve, will make ſervice pleaſant. And thou doſt love thy God. He has given himſelf with every covenant bleſſing to be thine, and theſe bleſſings are to be enjoyed in thy walk with him. With this faith look at duty. It is the expreſſion of gratitude to thy deareſt friend, and it is the way to enjoy his divine friendſhip. He requires it out of love to thee, and would have thee to do it out of love to him. O! how exalted is duty, when communion with God is carried on by it! He would have thee to keep cloſe to him, in order to maintain a ſenſe of his graci-

ous preſence in thy heart, and ſo to walk with him as to have his love to thee confirmed at every ſtep; and therefore thou ſhouldſt ſeek to preſerve a conſtant nearneſs and holy fellowſhip with him in every thing thou doeſt. This is the will of thy God. May it be thine, O my ſoul. Study this glorious way of goſpel duty. Pray to be taught it better, and to go on in it more ſpiritually every day. Bring it into all thy affairs. In thy calling, as well as in the means of grace, in temporal as well as in heavenly matters, ſet the Lord always before thee, and ſo live, and act in every thing as to keep up communion with thy God and Father in Jeſus by the grace of the holy Spirit.

When God is thus become the dear object of thy happy heart, then every way wherein his love is to be enjoyed will become delightful. The time, the place, the means of meeting with him will be greatly deſired and much longed for. Thy heart cannot but be, where thy treaſure is. Thou wilt want no ſpur to duty, no whip to drive thee to ordinances. It will be enough, that the Lord is there. As when he ſaid to David—ſeek ye my face—his heart replied--thy face, Lord, will I ſeek. His heart ſaid it. His affections were ſet upon God, and he was ready to ſeek, wherever God was to be found. No hunted hart ever panted more after the water-brooks, than his ſoul did after God. His hope in doing

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any thing was to have God's gracious preſence with him. And his happineſs in it was to have communion with God. This is goſpel duty. And what a glorious privilege is it! O that it may be my happy experience thus to meet God in all his ways, and to enjoy him in my daily walk. That thou mayeſt grow in this divine fellowſhip, conſider, O my ſoul, ſome of the duties of the firſt table, and learn to practiſe them upon goſpel principles. The firſt and chief is PRAYER, which conſiſts in keeping up daily converſe with thy God upon all occaſions. This is the breathing of the new born ſoul. It wants to draw the air of heaven, and to live in its own proper element. There is a way opened for it unto the throne of glory, and the children of God may approach it with boldneſs: for it is a throne of grace, and he that ſitteth upon it loves to hear and to anſwer their petitions. He is *their* Father. "I go, ſays "Jeſus, to my Father and to your Father; my "Father himſelf loveth you; aſk what ye will "of him in my name he will do it." This is the beloved object of prayer--a reconciled Father in Jeſus--whoſe heart is full of tenderneſs to the complaints and miſeries of his family--his promiſes are the declarations of his pure love--a dependence upon his fulfilling them does honor to his truth and faithfulneſs, and always brings down the bleſſing. The holy Spirit abides with the children of God to teach them thus to pray

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in faith. He helps their infirmities in prayer, ſtrengthens their graces, and beſtows on them their comforts. He enables them to come with boldneſs, and have acceſs with confidence. Whatever their Father has freely promiſed to give them in Jeſus, they can aſk in faith, nothing wavering: for they know his promiſes cannot fail. They find them daily fulfilled, whereby their holy familiarity with their Father increaſes. He draws nearer to them and they draw nearer to him. This their mutual intercourſe may be interrupted, but it cannot be entirely broken off. God is always diſpoſed to hear; although the believer be not always able to pray rejoicing. It is ſtill his privilege, although he may not find any great delight in it; but if he continue to make conſtant uſe of his privilege his delight will return, and God will fulfil to him the gracious promiſe--I will make them joyful in my houſe of prayer.

Thus the child of God learns to love prayer, yea to pray without ceaſing. He lives under his Father's eye, and in a dependence on his Father's care for him night and day. And he has hereby as true and laſting fellowſhip with the things of God in his ſoul, as he has with the things of this world in his body.

O what an exalted privilege is this! How highly is prayer hereby ennobled! It is not a law duty to an abſolute God: but a gracious intercourſe

intercourſe with a covenant God.--Not practiſed that he may love us: but becauſe he loves us--not to make us his children: but becauſe we are his children. It ſhould be performed always in this faith. If there be infirmities in it, ſuch as wandering, coldneſs, or the like, we are to remember, that we are not heard for the goodneſs of our prayers, nor anſwered for the fervency of them. That which makes our perſons accepted obtains acceptance for our ſervices alſo. We and all we do are only accepted in the beloved: "For through Jeſus Chriſt we have an "acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father," *Eph.* ii. 18. our acceſs is through Jeſus Chriſt. Truſting to his finiſhed ſalvation we enter into the preſence of the Father, and guided by the holy Spirit we pray in faith. Whatever we aſk in the Son's name we know that we have the petitions which we deſired of him. This ſpiritualizes prayer, and puts glory upon it: becauſe there is heavenly fellowſhip with God in it, with the Father through the Son, by the one Spirit.

Theſe are ſome of the privileges of Chriſtian prayer. Thou goeſt, O my ſoul, to meet thy God in it---to converſe with thy Father---to call on him for the fulfilling of his promiſes made in Jeſus---to wait on him for his anſwers---and to give him his glory. O what bleſſed ſeaſons haſt thou enjoyed in this communion with thy God! How

How has he manifeſted his nearneſs to thee, and bounty towards thee! Haſt thou not found his heart open, his ears open, and his hands open to grant thee the requeſt of thy lips? And when thou haſt not found ſuch ſweet fellowſhip with thy God in prayer, yet thy dependence on his faithful word has been exerciſed and improved. Thou haſt left thy petitions with thy friend and advocate, truſting to that moſt glorious deſcription of him in *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. "And another "angel came and ſtood at the altar, having a "golden cenſer, and there was given unto him "much incenſe that he ſhould offer it with the "prayers of all ſaints upon the golden altar, "which was before the throne. And the ſmoke "of the incenſe, which came with the prayers "of the ſaints aſcended up before God out of "the angel's hand." O thou great angel of the covenant thus preſent my prayers. They are nothing worth, but as perfumed with thy divine odors. Let them ever aſcend before God out of thy hand with the ſmoke of the incenſe of thy ſacrifice and interceſſion. Bleſſed Spirit of prayer increaſe my faith, that I may truſt more to a prayer hearing God and Father, who is always ready to grant every good thing promiſed to his children in Chriſt Jeſus. *Amen.*

PRAISE and prayer go together. The prayer of faith will afford continual matter for praiſe. The one is a dependence on God for every pro-

miſed bleſſing, the other is the acknowledgment of his having beſtowed it. Innocent man had his heart in this ſweet work. It was his happineſs. Every breath in paradiſe was praiſe. The redeemed man has more reaſon. His obligations are far greater, than Adam was under, to his God---raiſed from his fall---ſaved from the guilt and miſery of it---choſen and called to this ſalvation by mere grace---through faith a partaker of it---an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Chriſt, O what motives are theſe to continual thankfulneſs! And theſe motives are effectual, when the holy Spirit diſcovers the things that are freely given to us of God. He makes us ſenſible of them and thankful for them: for he preſerves in the ſoul a bleſſed poverty of ſpirit, an humble abiding ſenſe of wants and unworthineſs, and thus he lays a ſure foundation for thankfulneſs. Every bleſſing is then received with a, Why me---what am I, and what is my Father's houſe, that God ſhould deal thus bountifully with me? I muſt refer it all to the praiſe of the glory of his own grace: bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed me with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly things in Chriſt. All theſe bleſſings flow from the Father's love in his Son, and the holy Spirit has diſcovered to me that boundleſs ocean of love, and has often refreſhed me with its life-giving ſtreams. He has made known to me the good pleaſure of the Father's

Father's will, which he had purpoſed in himſelf, to chooſe me by his diſtinguiſhing grace to be one of his children, and through faith in Jeſus Chriſt I read my adoption, and take poſſeſſion of the inheritance of children. Mine experience of theſe bleſſings cannot be queſtioned, while I am receiving out of the fulneſs of Jeſus grace for grace. O how great is my debt! It is equal to the eternal Three; ſo ſhould my gratitude be. It is very meet, right and my bounden duty, that I ſhould at all times and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty everlaſting God: therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praiſing thee and ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of hoſts: heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord moſt high. *Amen.*

May ſuch as this, O my ſoul, be thy daily tribute of thanks. Conſider what thou oweſt to thy God—how great are his favors, how many, how endleſs---and beſtowed on the moſt unworthy. Review his goodneſs in giving thee being, and in preſerving it. Remember from how many dangers and pains he has delivered thee; what health and creature comforts he has vouchſafed of his mere bounty; and what a monument of his long ſuffering thou art. O what a miracle! that one, like thee, ſhould be out of hell. Then

put to the account ſpiritual favors, what bleſſings thou haſt received from the Father's love in Jeſus; what bleſſings thou art entitled to in him, not only in time, but alſo in eternity. Caſt up the mighty ſum, and ſay, How much it is. Canſt thou tell the numbers thereof? No. It is beyond the power of the greateſt arithmetician. If thou couldſt write a figure upon every atom in the creation, thou wouldſt want a new world, whereon to ſum up the vaſt account: for thy mercies reach to the heaven of heavens, and they are alſo everlaſting. Then conſider to whom thou art thus indebted. Is it not to a juſtly offended God, who might have glorified all his perfections in puniſhing thee for thy ſins? Whereas in wonderful grace he has choſen and called thee to the adoption of Sons. He is thy Father. This is the ſpring of all thy mercies. In love he gave his Son to finiſh thy ſalvation. And his ſpirit has brought thee to believe in it, and to enjoy it. This is the ſource of all thy praiſe. The object of thankſgiving is thy covenant God, who is related to thee in ſuch a bond of love, as will bring thee under eternal obligations. Thou art therefore in all thy praiſe to remember thy relation to Father, Son, and Spirit, thy debt to them for that moſt bleſſed relation, thy growing, ever growing debt. Praiſe will pay none of it. The ſaints in glory do but acknowledge it. While they are praiſing more, the ſum is increaſing. O

my ſoul, beg of thy God to give thee grace, that thine acknowledgments may be in ſome meaſure like theirs. They are crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God, giving glory for the Father's love in Jeſus, and for their experience of it by the eternal Spirit. May this ſubject be thine, more ſpiritual, more holy every day, till it be what theirs is, perfect and without intermiſſion.

Since it is thy privilege, O my ſoul, to pray to thy covenant God, and to praiſe him for covenant mercies, then thou wilt highly prize the holy SCRIPTURES; becauſe without them thou canſt not know what to pray for, nor what is indeed a mercy. Thy faith has nothing to ſtand upon, but the word of God, and nothing to praiſe him for, but mercies therein promiſed, and by believing received. O how dear then ſhould his word be to thee; how greatly ſtudied, how diligently heard, that by it thou mayeſt grow in every grace, which is needful for thy holy walk with God. It is the appointed means by which the holy Spirit acts. It is his great inſtrument in beginning and carrying on ſpiritual life. He opens the underſtanding to know the ſcriptures, he inclines the will and the affections to receive them in the love of the truth, and he influences the whole man to ſubmit to live under the obedience of faith. Whatever ſtrength, victory, comfort, or bleſſing of any kind he beſtows, it comes

comes by obeying the truth through the Spirit. So that thou canſt not go on in thy walk with God, but by conſtant and believing uſe of the ſcriptures. They ſhould be thy ſtudy night and day, heard and read carefully, mixed with faith, treaſured up in thy memory, received into thy heart, and brought into thy life, and all by the teaching of the holy Ghoſt, in order to thine enjoyment of the promiſed bleſſings of the Father's love through the Son's ſalvation. Thus the word will be the means of thy maintaining fellowſhip with the bleſſed Trinity. By mixing faith with it thou wilt be conſtantly receiving from them covenant mercies: and ſo thou wilt go forward, Thy ſteps will be ordered aright according to the word, and thy way will be proſperous.

Conſider then, O my ſoul, whether thou art making this uſe of the ſcriptures. Doſt thou find the means of thy growth in divine knowledge, in faith and love? Do they really promote thy communion with God, and on that account are they daily more thy ſtudy, and thy delight? Never think of hearing or reading them without praying for the teaching of the holy Spirit, that they may be the means of keeping up fellowſhip with thy Father in Jeſus. For this end they were revealed, and if this end be not anſwered they profit thee nothing. Make it then thy conſtant practice--before hearing, to pray for a ſpiritual appetite,

tite, that as new born babes desire milk, so thou mayest hunger and thirst for the good word of life--in hearing, beg of God, that thou mayest feed upon the word and digest it, and thine inward man may be nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine--after hearing, pray for a sanctified memory to treasure up for use, what thou hast learnt, that as occasion shall serve it may be realized, and brought into practice, thy life and conversation being cast into the mould of the word. With the same dependence on thy divine teacher read, as well as hear, the scriptures. Meditate on them. Converse about them, expecting to find them able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, and as thy faith in him increases, able to bring in richer experience of thy Father's love in him.

How sweet is prayer, how delightful is praise, how blessed is hearing and reading the word, when these are the means of meeting and conversing with God! His presence puts the highest honor upon them, and exalts duty into a royal privilege: for he is present as a Father with his children. O what a dignity is it to have God for our Father! What an happiness to have free fellowship with him in this dearest relation? In thy daily hearing and reading his word, observe, O my soul, what is spoken of this holy fellowship; and seek to maintain it, and to improve it

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in every appointed way, particularly in keeping the command of thy dying friend.

Do this in remembrance of me. When his diſciples meet together for this purpoſe, then place the whole dependence of thy heart upon thy crucified Saviour. Conſidering the infinite and everlaſting efficacy of the ſacrifice of his body and ſoul to take away ſin, draw near in faith to feaſt upon it: for his fleſh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Look well to the end of the inſtitution. It was not only to remind thee of, but alſo to convey to thee, all the bleſſings of that one offering, which perfects for ever. It was to teach thee, that thy ſpiritual life, and every grace and comfort of it are as dependent upon Chriſt crucified, as the life of thy body is upon the meat and drink of this world. Thy life comes from his death. Thy life is nouriſhed by feeding upon Chriſt thy paſſover, who was ſacrificed for thee. He intended by the bread to point out unto thee his body, and by the wine his blood---by eating and drinking them, thy taking and living upon him---by thy bodily ſupport received from them, the nouriſhment of thy ſoul by eating his fleſh and drinking his blood. He would have thee to look through the ſigns to the things ſignified. Thou art not to reſt in the outward act, but to reſt in the promiſe in the word of God. Thy faith is not to be exerciſed about the Lord's ſupper as a duty; but it is to

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be exercifed upon his word; and what he has therein promifed to make it, that thou art to expect in taking it. He appointed it to be the means of communicating with him, and of thy enjoying fellowfhip with him in his fufferings. It is a fpiritual believing act, in which thou art invited to partake of the paſchal lamb. It is the Lord's paſſover; and will certainly anfwer every purpofe, for which he inſtituted it. He appointed it to be the means of ſafety from the deſtroyer, of deliverance from bondage, of free and full forgiveneſs of all ſins, of an happy paſſage through the red ſea, and of the everlaſting poſſeſſion of the promiſed inheritance. For theſe gracious purpoſes the Father's love gave his Son to be a lamb ſlain, and then a lamb feaſted on: and the holy Spirit makes it a feaſt indeed. It is to the believing receiver ſpiritually, whatever the paſſover was to the Jews on their coming out of Egypt. It is a communion with the bleſſed Trinity---with the Father for providing ſuch a banquet of love---with the Son for giving himſelf to be a lamb ſlain, and to be a ſpiritual repaſt to his people in earth and in heaven---with the holy Spirit for rendering the bread which is broken the communion of the body of Chriſt, and the cup of bleſſing the communion of the blood of Chriſt. Communion ſignifies union with---the believer united to Chriſt---one with Chriſt---a member in his body, lives in him, and on him,

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has communications of life, nouriſhment, ſtrength, comfort, &c. as the members have from their union with the head. He has a real inward fellowſhip with Jeſus, in his croſs and paſſion, in his reſurrection and aſcenſion, in his interceſſion and ſitting at the right hand of the majeſty on high. He communicates now with Jeſus in all the bleſſings of his Father's love, and will communicate with him in all his Father's glory. O what a privilege is the Lord's Supper, when it is thus the means of communion with the Son, and with his Father through the Spirit! What an honor is it to be admitted to a feaſt inſtituted by the Lamb of God, and for the enjoyment of the love of God! What a bleſſing is it to ſit down now to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb, and to partake by faith of its ſpiritual realities and delights! There is nothing beyond this upon earth, and it has ſometimes been to the believing receiver a foretaſte of heaven. Yes, bleſſed be God, it has been, even to thee, O my ſoul, unworthy as thou art of one crumb from the maſter's table, a feaſt of fat things, of wines kept, even of fat things, full of marrow, of wines kept and well-refined. And when thou haſt not been ſo highly feaſted, yet thou haſt enjoyed ſolid communion. Partaking of the bread and wine according to the Lord's inſtitution, and depending on the Lord's promiſe, thou haſt been fed and nouriſhed at his table. The virtue of the Spirit has been put forth

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in thy heart, and thou haſt as truly by faith eat the fleſh, and drank the blood of the Son of man, as thou didſt eat the bread and drink the wine. It was ſtrictly ſpeaking a *communion:* being united to Chriſt, thou waſt a partaker of Chriſt, and hadſt fellowſhip with him in his life and death. O pray for more of this. Beg of the holy Spirit to increaſe thy communion with Jeſus, that thou mayeſt live more in him and on him, and thereby enjoy more of the love of thy heavenly Father. Plead his promiſe, and expect the fulfilling of it: "He that eateth my fleſh and drinketh my blood "dwelleth in me, and I in him: As the living "Father hath ſent me, and I live by the Father, "ſo he that eateth me, even he ſhall live by me," *John* vi. 56, 57.

Viewing the duties of the firſt table in this light, how exalted are they, and ſpiritual! What a glory does it put upon them, that the believer has fellowſhip with the eternal Three, and in prayer, and praiſe, in hearing and reading the word, and at the Lord's Supper he enjoys their covenant mercies, partaking of them now as really by faith, as ever he will by ſenſe in heaven! The law written and engraven in ſtones was glorious, but the law thus written upon his heart excelleth in glory. The two firſt tables of ſtone were broken, the other two are loſt: but no time ſhall deface the writing of the holy Spirit. The new heart, turned in love to God, ſhall keep

his impreſſion for ever. Faith ſhould reſt ſecurely upon this: becauſe he has undertaken to abide for ever with his own people, that the purpoſes of the Father's love, and the bleſſings of the Son's ſalvation may be always enjoyed by them. In remembrance of this great truth they keep the

LORD'S-DAY. They reſt on it from labour, declaring thereby their belief of the reſt, which the eternal Three have provided in Jeſus—a reſt in their ſouls—given without their labour and pains—ſecured to them by covenant—kept for them by almighty power—a ſabbath remaining for the people of God, into which they ſhall as certainly enter, as Jeſus their forerunner is entered. Sabbath ſignifies a day of reſt. It was ſet apart in memory of God's finiſhing the works of the firſt creation: and is obſerved now in memory of his finiſhing the works of the new creation. The end for which the world was made will be anſwered ſoon; and then it, and all the works therein ſhall be burnt up, and the place of them found no more: but the glorious work of the God-man ſhall endure for ever. In honor of this greateſt work of God we keep the Lord's-day. It is his Sabbath—a day eternally famous for his finiſhing the work of ſalvation, and entering into his reſt. "And we who have believed, "ſays the apoſtle, do enter into reſt." We do enter into it now by faith, and we ſhare with him

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in his Sabbath. The atonement which he made, the righteouſneſs which he wrought out, the victory which he obtained, the works which he perfected for ever, and the glory which he now inherits, we enjoy at preſent by believing, and enter upon the poſſeſſion of them. According to our faith, ſuch is our reſt. He that believes without doubt or wavering in the finiſhed ſalvation of Jeſus, he will have the peace of God ruling in his conſcience, he will experience the perfect love of God to him, which will make him reſt in his love to God, and then he will delight himſelf in the ways of God. This is the chriſtian ſabbath. It conſiſts in reſting upon Jeſus, and in depending upon his having finiſhed the works of redemption, and then in living upon them for our ſouls, as much as we do upon the works of creation for our bodies.

Sweet is the day of reſt, ſpent in this holy employment. Happy time! ſet apart for ſpiritual intercourſe with God, and conſecrated for keeping up fellowſhip with him in his fatherly love in Jeſus, and for receiving from him communications of his graces and bleſſings. Thrice happy day! in which this fellowſhip is kept up, and theſe graces and bleſſings are enjoyed. By this heavenly converſe the inward man is renewed with growing ſtrength: his faculties are enlarged; and their happineſs is increaſed. By which means he comes nearer to the ſpiritual reſt

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of the heavenly ſabbath. He calls it his delight holy of the Lord, honorable: becauſe the end of its inſtitution is anſwered to him, and he has on it happy communion with his God. When he draws near to God in his appointed ways, he finds God in them and experiences his loving kindneſs which is better than life itſelf. Bleſſed is the man, who is thus highly favored. He enters within the veil into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, and finds a moſt loving Father upon a throne of grace. In every ſervice on the Lord's day, he ſeeks a more intimate acquaintance and more ſpiritual fellowſhip with him. His very heart is engaged in this work. His ſoul thirſteth, and his very fleſh longeth to meet God, as he has met him in the ſanctuary. Therein he has found communications of grace, which have rendered the ordinances delightful indeed. He rejoices in hopes of meeting God and of drawing near to him in prayer, of praiſing him ſtill more and more for his abundant mercies, of hearing the reviving ſound of goſpel grace, and of everlaſting love, and of receiving it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, and of ſitting down to the banquet of heaven in communion with Chriſt crucified, through him partaking of the Father's love by the Spirit's influence. Bleſſed is he of the Lord, who is thus ſpiritual in ſabbath duties. By keeping up conſtant communion with God

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in them his bleſſedneſs is increaſing. He is already in poſſeſſion of the ſame things, which his elder brethren are enjoying in heaven: and he will become more heavenly minded, while he maintains daily fellowſhip with the eternal Three in their covenant offices and bleſſings.

Conſider, O my ſoul, that theſe privileges are thine, Look well to thine improvement of them. Remember, thou art already by believing entered into reſt. Thy ſabbath is begun---a day, whoſe ſun ſhall never ſet---whoſe glory ſhall ſhine brighter for evermore. May thine enjoyment of this reſt, which is ſo glorious, be growing, until thou attain to the eternal ſabbath. O pray thy Lord to lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, to vouchſafe thee more of the love of his heart, and more of the bounty of his hand, more communion with him, and more communications from him, that thou mayeſt be growing up into Jeſus in all things, and be ready, whenever he calls thee, to enter in with him into his perfect reſt.

Thus the firſt table duties are kept. By the teaching of the holy Spirit they become goſpel privileges. When he makes us new creatures in Chriſt Jeſus, then we take the Three in Jehovah to be our God. We know our Father in Chriſt, believe in him and love him. We will have no other Gods, but him. We give his honor to none, his name to none, our time and heart-

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ſervice to none, but him. His love made known to us, engages our affections, and puts us upon ſeeking fellowſhip with him in all appointed ways. Yea, the more we know of his perfect love to us, the more we are diſpoſed to love him, and to witneſs it in every thing we do. It becomes our ſtudy to walk before him in all well pleaſing: for we find it our happineſs. Whether we eat or drink, riſe up, or lie down to reſt, follow our worldly calling, or have any dealings with men, we endeavour to do all in faith. This makes the common things of life ſpiritual actions: becauſe in them we maintain intercourſe with God. This is indeed the heavenly temper of the children of the moſt High. They ſeek the preſence, and the bleſſings of their Father in Jeſus in all they do. They are taught to live in a ſimple dependence upon him. They acknowledge this dependence by looking up to him for every thing needful, and having received it by giving him all his glory. Then they are returned in heart and life to that God, from whom they had departed by unbelief.

Moſt bleſſed return! For now the old ſinful nature with its affections and luſts is pardoned, and thereby they have loſt their dominion. They have no right to exerciſe their tyranny any longer. The baſe ſelfiſh tempers, which rendered a man a plague to others, and often a burden to himſelf, are dethroned. The pardoning

ing them is ſubduing them. Theſe always go together. They kept the underſtanding in darkneſs, but now it is light in the Lord. They blinded the conſcience and made it inſenſible, but now it has ſeen its guilt, and has found peace with God. The heart was engaged in their ſervice, but now God has ſet up his throne in it, and ſweetly rules over the affections. Thus a free pardon brings a man into liberty. He ceaſes to be a ſlave to his ſelfiſh tempers. A full pardon brings him full victory over them: for then he has the blood of Jeſus to cleanſe him from all ſin, and the Spirit of Jeſus to ſubdue all ſin. He is taken into the protection of Chriſt, and is his free-man. None ſhall make him a ſlave. The Spirit of Chriſt rules in him, and makes him willing to live under the reign of grace: He dwells and abides with him to preſerve in his heart the love of God, and to produce in it the proper fruits of that love towards men. Thus he brings the ſinner to love the

DUTIES OF THE SECOND TABLE, which our Lord has ſummed up in one ſentence--"Thou "ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." This love was loſt at the fall. Nothing is in mankind by nature but ſelfiſhneſs. He is a ſlave to diverſe luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Every age has felt this malady, and complained of it. But no human means have been able to remedy

it. Fine ſyſtems of ethics, and beautiful plans of natural religion have been tried; the aid of ſtrong reaſoning, aſſiſted with the forces of logic and metaphyſics, has been called in, but all in vain. Selfiſh tempers broke through their cob-web arguments, and ſported with their imaginary bonds. Sometimes they poliſhed the outſide a little, and made a man a courtier: he looked, and ſmiled, and ſeemed to love; but they did not reach his heart. This is the prerogative of the Lord God. He only, who made us creatures, can make us new creatures. And until we are new born of God, we have every thing in us oppoſite to brotherly love. But when we are born of the Spirit, then we are taught of him to love one another. He teaches it, and he enforces it. His leſſons are entirely practical. He not only informs the underſtanding, but alſo influences the affections. Having diſpoſed and enabled the heart to love God, he evidences the power of this divine love by its genuine fruits towards men. Theſe are inſeparable from their cauſe. Divine love is never without brotherly love: for ſo far as the love of God is felt, it produces loving tempers. It opens and enlarges the heart, as the warm beams of the ſun open and expand the flowers. The agency, which performs this, is almighty. The holy Spirit having begotten the new nature writes upon it the law of love. He keeps it willing to reſiſt

and makes it able to overcome, the ſelfiſh tempers of the old man. The apoſtle Peter has given us a delightful deſcription of the manner of the divine proceeding herein, 1 *Pet.* i. 21, 22, 23. "Chriſt was manifeſt in thoſe laſt times for "you, who by him do believe in God, that "raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him "glory, that your faith and hope might be in "God: ſeeing ye have purified your ſouls in "obeying the truth through the Spirit unto un-"feigned love of the brethren, ſee that ye love "one another with a pure heart fervently: being "born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of in-"corruptible, by the word of God, which liveth "and abideth for ever." The Chriſtians to whom he writes were partakers of the new birth, they were born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible. The holy Spirit was the author of their regeneration. The word of truth was the means, which he made uſe of, they obeyed the truth through the Spirit. By believing it they were begotten again to a lively faith and hope in God. They evidenced their love to him by their unfeigned love of the brethren: they loved him that begat, and loved thoſe alſo that were begotten of him. From whence it appears, that the love of the brethren is not in the heart by nature, but is from the grace of the holy Spirit. He gives a new heart, and he ſheds abroad in it the love of God, which by his influence works mightily in

oppoſing and overcoming our ſelfiſh tempers, and in eſtabliſhing the practice of ſecond table duties. Theſe ſpring from divine love. The holy Spirit joins them together, as the cauſe and the effect. He teaches no man to love God without teaching him alſo to love the brethren. He rains and ſhines upon the tree of love: under his cultivation it thrives: He brings forth the ſweet and loving tempers of the new man, and they bear fruit abundantly. And bleſſed fruit it is: for God has great glory from it, and men much good. Love thinketh, ſpeaketh, and doeth no evil. Yea, it cannot be in the heart, without a deſire to do good to all men, eſpecially unto them that are of the houſhold of faith---to do good to their bodies and ſouls---to give honor to whom honor is due---to preſerve their lives---their property---their chaſtity--their good name---to bear no falſe witneſs, but always to ſpeak the truth of them---and to covet none of their bleſſings, either ſpiritual or temporal. This is morality---chriſtian morality---for it is learnt no where but in the ſchool of Chriſt. What his Spirit teaches, he enables alſo to perform, which moral perſuaſion cannot. He gives a will and a power to put off the ſelfiſh tempers of the old man, and to put on the loving graces of the new man: Theſe graces he preſerves by his almighty agency, and calls them into daily practice, through faith working by love---love to God from a ſenſe of his

his infinite goodneſs---and love to man for God's ſake. Thus the ſecond table duties, when done out of gratitude to God for his infinite mercies, help the believer on in his walk heavenwards, and are the means of maintaining conſtant fellowſhip with his God.

Is this, O my ſoul, thy happy experience? Examine carefully. What are thy tempers? What is thy practice, with reſpect to loving thy neighbour as thyſelf? There is great complaint in the world of the want of brotherly love. And no wonder. It cannot be in them, who are wholly lovers of themſelves. But may not the ſame complaint be taken up of the houſehold and family of faith? Are not the children of the ſame Father deficient in brotherly love? Yes, they are. Too, too often they live below their privilege, and thereby bring great diſhonor upon God, and give great offence to men. Be humbled, O my ſoul, for thine own failing. Remember, what reaſon thou haſt to mourn for the infirmities of thy love—how barren it is in its proper fruits---how cold, when it ſhould be fervent---how polluted, when it ſhould be pure---how covetous, when it ſhould be liberal. Haſt thou duly attended to the cauſe of this, and does it grieve thee to thy heart? Wouldſt thou be ſaved from ſelf-love, and increaſe in brotherly love, yet more and more? Since this is thy caſe, meditate carefully upon what is promiſed, and pray earneſtly for what is provided,

provided, for the ſubduing of thoſe tempers which are enemies to brotherly love, and which if not ſubdued will hinder thee from enjoying the love of God in thy walk with him.

Firſt, conſider thy ſtate. Thou art a pardoned ſinner, not under the law, but under grace—freely, fully ſaved from the guilt of all thy ſins. There is none to condemn, God having juſtified thee. He ſees thee in his Son, waſhed in his blood, clothed in his righteouſneſs and he embraces him and thee, the head and the members with the ſame affection.

Secondly, Conſider what is promiſed to them, who are in Chriſt. Sin ſhall not have dominion over them. Pardoned ſin ſhall not reign. It cannot, for it is dethroned. Thou art therefore free from its bondage. Stand faſt in this liberty. Now the condemning power of ſin is taken out of thy conſcience, make uſe of the grace provided in Jeſus to deliver thine heart from the love of it, and thy converſation from the ſlaviſh ſervice of it. And remember this grace is almighty. Truſt in it, and thou ſhalt be ſaved from the tyranny of every ſin. Therefore

Thirdly, Read the great charter of grace, and mark to what glorious privileges thou art entitled. Being ſaved from the guilt of all ſin, and having a promiſe of being ſaved from the dominion of all ſin, as the Lord's free-man, thou art by faith to claim thy birth-right and to enjoy it. Since Chriſt has given thee liberty, to whom

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ſhouldſt thou be a ſlave? Put off therefore the old man with his luſts and deeds: ſerve him no longer: it is a bleſſed part of redemption to be ſaved from his ſervice. God be thanked, that he may be put off, as a garment, which you have done with, and will put on no more. Away with it, it is filthy and abominable altogether. Yea worſe ſtill: the plague is in it. Death and hell are in it: for the old man, ſinful nature, thus to be put off, is a body of ſin, and ſelfiſh tempers are his members, ſuch as anger, wrath, malice, lies, inordinate affection, evil concupiſcence, and covetouſneſs which is idolatry. Theſe muſt be put off, or they will be always plotting and acting againſt brotherly love. Therefore the new man, renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, oppoſes them, and is mighty through God to mortify them. By the ſame power he puts on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long ſuffering, forgiveneſs of injuries, even as Chriſt forgave him, ſo he forgives: and unto all theſe graces he puts on love, which is the complete binding of them together. What an amiable character is here of the new man! He is created anew in Chriſt Jeſus, that he may exerciſe every kind and benevolent temper to the brethren. He is renewed in his heart to the unfeigned love of them; and is enabled to manifeſt it by every work and labor of love. And leaſt

leaſt the vile tempers of the old man, ſtill in being, although dethroned, ſhould get dominion again, he is ſtrengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man to crucify them day by day. Since this is hard work, conſiſting in continual and ſevere ſelf-denial, no leſs then in cutting off right hand, and in plucking out right eye, luſts; for thine encouragement to perſevere, conſider

Fourthly, that thou art *in* Chriſt---a member in his body---and in him thou haſt perfect and eternal redemption from the old man of ſin with his affections and luſts. The more this is believed, the more will the fruits of it appear. Faith in the abſolute and everlaſting victory of thy glorified head will animate thee as one of his members to reſiſt thy vanquiſhed foes, knowing thou art a partaker of his victory, and in his ſtrength, and to his glory thou art fighting againſt them. In him thou haſt already conquered. In him thou ſhalt be more than a conqueror. Reckon thyſelf therefore to be dead indeed unto ſin, but alive unto God *in* Jeſus Chriſt thy Lord. And depend on him for the power of his death, that he may put it forth in thee, and mortify ſin, and for the power of his reſurrection to quicken thee to newneſs of life. Thy communion with him in his death and reſurrection will be in proportion to thy faith. If thou believeſt ſtedfaſtly, that thou art one with him, thou wilt find the effect of it in ſtedfaſt communion.

communion. Cleave them to him, as a branch in the vine. Planted together in the likeneſs of his death, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to crucify thy ſelfiſh tempers. Planted together in the likeneſs of his reſurrection, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to keep thee alive to God. To this fellowſhip with Jeſus thou art called. Thou haſt a right to communicate with him in his life and death. And whilſt thou art enjoying it by the faith of the Son of God, ſin ſhall have no more dominion over thee, than it has over him. This being thy glorious birthright, O my ſoul, put honor upon it. Enjoy it in the peace of thy conſcience, and in the love of thy heart. Read thy perfect redemption in Jeſus from every thing oppoſite to brotherly love; and improve this thy experience. As there is ſufficient grace promiſed and provided for thee, ſee thou make uſe of it and manifeſt it openly in thy tempers and in thy walk! For conſider

Fifthly, Thy God and Father calls upon thee to give glory to him for his love to thee by exerciſing love towards the brethren: and thou art bound to this by ten thouſand ties. Has he loved thee freely, doſt thou know it, and is the grateful ſenſe of it upon thy heart? How then can it be hid? It cannot; it will manifeſt itſelf, as light does. The Father has choſen thee in his Son, that he might communicate to thee of his goodneſs, and he has made thee a child of light,

light, that thou mighteſt reflect the rays of his goodneſs upon others. Thou art to ſhew forth the praiſes of him that hath called thee out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. He hath called thee out of the deadneſs and blindneſs of thy natural ſtate, and hath enlightened thee with the light of life. How marvellous, that it ſhould ever ſhine upon thee! Marvellous indeed, that thou ſhouldſt ſhine, as a light in the world! Admire this grace. Let others admire it with thee by ſeeing the reality, and by feeling the comfort of it. As the ſun not only enlightens, but alſo enlivens with his fruitful rays the face of the earth, and cheers every creature upon it: ſo let thy light ſhine before men. Give them clear proof of thy love to God by thy love to them: let them feel the bleſſed fruits of it, that they may ſee thy good works, and glorify thy Father who is in heaven. Love in thy heart will ſhew itſelf. It will communicate its gracious rays, and the Father of lights will have the praiſe. This ſhould be thine end, as it is his. He aims at his own glory in all his mercies: this aim ſhould be thine alſo. Thy Father calls upon thee to do good to others, that he may be glorified thereby. O what an high calling is thine! What an honor does God put upon thee. Thou art to bring him glory from men---from his own children: for their bowels are to be refreſhed by thee---and from others, that whereas they

they would ſpeak againſt thee as an evil-doer, they may by thy good works which they ſhall behold glorify God in the day of viſitation. Aim at this. Look at no motive to do good to men below the glory of God. And remember, thy doing it may be the means of his viſiting them, as he viſited thee, with his great ſalvation. O bleſſed fruit of brotherly love; may it be the happy effect of thy light ſhining before men. May God be daily honored by it, and the comfort, and if it pleaſe him, the ſalvation of his people be thereby promoted. Yea, Lord, this is my prayer. My heart ſays, *Amen.*

If thou findeſt it very difficult to live in the conſtant practice of brotherly love, meditate, O my ſoul, upon the goſpel motives for an increaſe of faith, and ſeek for the promiſed aſſiſtance to enable thee to love others as God hath loved thee. Above all expect the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghoſt. He only can write this delightful law upon the heart---the fair impreſſion of it is kept by his power---and the exerciſe of it in thy tempers and walk is the work of his grace. O pray then for a conſtant ſupply of the Spirit, that in all thy dealings with mankind it may appear thou haſt been with Jeſus. Set his moſt amiable life before their eyes. Give them reaſon to honor his beneficence, from thy copying it legibly after him. Let his love to thee be glorified from thy labor of love to them. Study

to

to ſhew forth his praiſes, and go about doing good, as he did. And hereby convince the world, that Jeſus Chriſt was the greateſt moraliſt, and that his diſciples come the neareſt to the perfect pattern of their maſter; as a poet of of our own obſerves---

> Talk they of *morals?* O thou bleeding love!
> Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
> The grand morality is love of thee.

The love of Jeſus teaches and enforces the love of the brethren. The ſpirit of Jeſus writes it upon the heart, and makes it practical in the life. And thus the two tables are joined together: and love to him that begat produces love to them that are begotten of him. When the happy believer is walking in this love to his Father and to his family, then he will live in the obſervance of the duties, which relate to himſelf: for he was taught them, when he returned in his heart to God. And every ſtep he walks with God is in the practice of them.

The firſt temptation was an offer of independence---"Ye ſhall be as Gods"---man was drawn away by it, and fell from his high eſtate. Still this mother ſin is fruitful in fallen man. In great mercy there is a pardon provided, and in the way of receiving the pardon, there is a remedy for it. The infinite wiſdom of God ſo contrived the way of our recovery, that without Chriſt we can

can do nothing. His ſalvation undertaken and finiſhed for us, his ſalvation applied to us, the bleſſings of his ſalvation enjoyed by us in time, and in eternity, are the free gifts of his free grace. He is the author. He is the finiſher. He carries it on from firſt to laſt. All our ſufficiency is of him. We cannot without him ſo much as think a good thought. Therefore his redeemed people are brought off from all truſt in any other object, and are taught to place their whole dependence for ſalvation, and for every thing that accompanies it, upon the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

To this end the holy Spirit, the great convincer of ſin, had made them acquainted with themſelves. He had awakened them to a right knowledge of their ſtate, of which they had not been ſenſible before; and they found that they were fallen and apoſtate creatures. He ſhewed them ſin in its exceeding ſinfulneſs, and they taſted ſome of the bitter fruits of it: they felt in what a dreadful condition their departure from God had left them---ſo ignorant, that they could not by any human means attain to the leaſt ſaving knowledge of God---ſo guilty, that let them do all they could, ſtill the condemning ſentence of the law ſtood out againſt them---ſo unholy, that ſoul and body were ſold under ſin, and ready to every unholy word and work---ſo utterly helpleſs, that it was impoſſible they ſhould of themſelves attain true happineſs, or eſcape deſerved

miſery.

miſery. The holy Spirit taught them theſe leſſons practically. His conviction carried demonſtration with it. He not only made them feel their guilt and their danger; but he alſo opened a way for pardon and ſafety. He led them to Jeſus, and in him they found every thing needful for their ſalvation---treaſured up for them by the free covenant love of the Father---ſecured to them by the fulfilling of all covenant conditions in the life and death of the God-man---and received by the faith of the operation of the holy Ghoſt: by whom they were made new creatures in Chriſt Jeſus---members under him their head---united as intimately as the branches are to the vine---and living by, and in, and on him, every moment, and for every thing. Thus the glorifier of Jeſus teaches all his members to depend upon the fulneſs of their head, and he abides with them in order to keep them in this dependence. He teſtifies to them of Jeſus---"He is your whole "ſalvation, your all in all; you have not, you "never will have, any thing to glory in, but in "the Lord---whatever good you receive comes "from his grace---whatever evil you eſcape, is "from his bleſſing---and if ever you have eternal "life, it will be the free gift of God in Chriſt "Jeſus. Your bodies alſo are dependent on him, "as well as your ſouls: perſonal, family, natio-"nal mercies are his royal favors, and beſtowed "out of his ſovereign bounty." Thus he teaches

believers.

believers. He humbles them, that they may exalt the Saviour. He makes them poor in ſpirit that they may live upon his riches. He keeps them ſenſible of their own emptineſs, that they may be making conſtant uſe of the Saviour's fulneſs, and living in an abſolute dependence upon him for every thing. While they live thus by the faith of the ſon of God, every high thought is brought into ſubjection to him. Pride is daily mortified. Self-complacency is abhorred. Self-admiration is abominable. Humility is become their clothing, and they cannot put it off: becauſe every moment they are making uſe of it. Sins, wants, miſeries, temptations, &c. are continually reminding them of their vileneſs, and of God's goodneſs. And this truth, enforced by the holy Spirit, makes them willing to learn of Jeſus to be meek and lowly. They become teachable ſcholars, and ſit very low at his feet, where they attain to true humility of heart. And this influences their whole behaviour. In a deep and abiding ſenſe of their entire ſinfulneſs and helpleſſneſs they loath themſelves before God, and walk humbly before men. They feel they are of themſelves nothing but ſin, and if left to themſelves can be nothing but miſery, therefore they put their whole truſt and confidence in a covenant God, and his free grace has from them all its glory.

What

What is thy knowledge, O my ſoul, and what is thine experience of this chriſtian poverty of ſpirit? Art thou acquainted with it in the ground of thine heart, and is it in thy daily practice? Examine thyſelf, and with diligence: for it is a moſt bleſſed grace, advanced to high honor in the court of Jeſus. To it he has made many exceeding great and precious promiſes. O pray to him for this royal gift. Wait on thy divine prophet, and hear his leſſons. He teaches, as man cannot. He recommends: He gives, the grace of humility. He makes his ſcholars truly humble in heart. Obſerve his abaſing doctrine, and may all within thee bow to the power of it.

Obſerve, how he humbles the ſinner. He convinces him of his ſinful ſtate, of the corruption of his whole nature, and of the depravity of every faculty of ſoul and body. The ſinner is made to feel it and to live under the ſenſe of it. And in order to faſten the conviction, clearer diſcoveries are daily made of this corruption: for it is a myſtery of iniquity. There is no tracing to the bottom its deep laid devices, and never ceaſing workings. The heart is deceitful above all things and deſperately wicked: who can know it? There is not a man upon earth, who knows all that may be known of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin, and of his own ſinfulneſs. When the Lord who ſearcheth the heart has laid open ſome of its infinite evil, he continues to diſcover

more. Every day brings to light ſtrange workings of corruption. The convinced ſinner has deeper views of his helpleſſneſs, and of his unworthineſs. And after many vain legal trials, he at laſt finds it impoſſible for him to do any thing, for which God ſhould pardon him and ſave him. Thus he is laid low with his mouth in the duſt---Behold, I am vile, filthy and abominable altogether, I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes.

Theſe are the humbling leſſons, which the holy Spirit teaches. He convinces the ſinner, that there is neither help nor hope in himſelf, and ſo leaves him nothing to truſt in, but the ſalvation provided in Jeſus by covenant love, and given freely by grace. And the manner of receiving this ſalvation is ſuch as cuts off all occaſion of boaſting: For faith is the only means appointed of God,---and faith is his gift---not beſtowed upon the worthy but upon the ungodly---not for any merit in them, or for any terms or conditions, which they have performed or ever will perform, but by an act of abſolute ſovereignty to the praiſe of the glory of his own grace. He will have mercy, becauſe he will have mercy. O humbling conſideration? How low does it bring the ſinner! How muſt his proud heart be abaſed, while he feels himſelf a debtor for every thing good to the mere will and pleaſure of God. And ſo long as he enjoys thoſe

good things, he is kept poor in ſpirit: Becauſe he has none of them in himſelf. They are laid up in the fulneſs of Jeſus, are to be had from thence only by faith, and are received as the ſenſe of his wants leads the believer to make uſe of them. Living by faith is the death of ſelf-importance. Then the loftineſs of man is bowed down, the haughtineſs of man is made low, and the Lord alone is exalted.

Obſerve, O my ſoul, what an honor God has put upon this grace. "Before honor is humility." Whom God honors he humbles firſt. He giveth grace to the humble: Becauſe the humble give him all his glory. The higheſt throne which he has upon earth is in the humbleſt heart. To it he vouchſafes his conſtant preſence, and makes the greateſt communications of his love: "For "thus ſaith the high and lofty One that inhabit-"eth eternity, whoſe name is holy, I dwell in the "high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a "contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit "of the humble, and to revive the heart of the "contrite ones." O what an honor is here promiſed to the humble! The greateſt they can have on this ſide of heaven. God will dwell with them; and what a bleſſing! and his temple ſhall be in the humble heart. The high and holy one paſſes by what is in higheſt eſteem among men. He ſtains the pride of human greatneſs and goodneſs. He does not vouchſafe to ſet up his throne with

with the princes, nor to give his honor to the learned, of the world. But he puts honor upon the contrite and humble. He condeſcends to viſit them, yea he delights to dwell with them, and in them—the higheſt above all heavens in the loweſt hearts. There he communicates his choiceſt love and richeſt favors. O my God, beſtow upon me this grace, which in thy ſight is ſo precious. Humble me that I may be revived with thy preſence, and refreſhed daily with thy love. Give me more humility, and fit me for nearer fellowſhip with thee. Bring down every high thought, and let me find it true, that God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth more grace unto the humble.

Thus the true poverty of ſpirit is needful, not only to bring the ſinner to Chriſt, but alſo to preſerve the believer in communion with him: For ſo long as he walks by faith, every thing will tend to promote this communion. In the daily ſenſe of his wants, he will go to his bountiful Saviour for a ſupply. In the feeling of his miſery, he will depend on his loving Saviour for relief: whereby he will be led to more intercourſe with him. What he finds wrong in himſelf will bring him to live more by faith, and as faith increaſes, ſo will his delight in God. He will grow more ſenſible of his weakneſs, and that will make him ſtronger in the Lord. He will know more of his own heart, which will humble him and keep him dependent on the grace of Jeſus.

He will ſee reaſon not to lean to his own underſtanding, but ever to pray, Lord, guide me by thy good Spirit. Viewing ſpots and blemiſhes in his beſt doings, his triumph will be, "I will "make mention of thy righteouſneſs, Lord Jeſus, "even of thine ONLY." Thus every thing will humble him, and lead him to live more by faith; by which means he will get faſter hold of Jeſus, live in nearer fellowſhip, and be receiving out of his fulneſs grace for grace—two graces at once ---the bleſſing needed---and thankfulneſs for it. Hereby a ſweet intercourſe will be kept open. To the humble God delights to give grace, and they delight to return him his glory. The more he gives, the more glory would they gladly return. And he does give more, and he receives it back again in thanks and praiſe. Bleſſed grace! by which this holy fellowſhip is maintained. Happy humility! by which the heart being emptied of ſelf is made capable of receiving the fulneſs which is of God. Then is the promiſe fulfilled—"Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit for theirs is "the kingdom of heaven."—it is theirs now---not only in title, but alſo in poſſeſſion: for the kingdom of God is within them. And they are partakers at preſent of its bleſſings and glories, as truly, though not ſo perfectly, as they will be in heaven. Meditate, O my ſoul, upon this divine grace. Thou ſeeſt the neceſſity of it, O pray earneſtly for it, and for more of it. The great idol SELF muſt be dethroned, where God reigns.

Thou

Thou canſt not walk with him, unleſs thou art humble in heart. And if thou haſt been walking with him, thou wilt be taught to ſtop, whenever thou beginneſt to look at thyſelf with admiration. O beg of the Lord then to give thee the true goſpel poverty of ſpirit. It is to be in conſtant practice and uſed for every thing: for thou ſeeſt how it keeps up fellowſhip with God, who makes the greateſt communications of himſelf to the humbleſt. And the reaſon is plain: becauſe they return him all his glory. If therefore thou wouldſt have much grace in exerciſe, pray for much humility. O my God, whatever thou giveſt, give humility with it, that I may not ſeek ſelf in it, but thine honor, nor lay it out upon myſelf, but to thy glory. Meek and lowly Jeſus, make me like thyſelf: keep me learning of thee, till I am perfectly like thee. I would come always poor to thee to receive of thy riches, and to receive with them an humble heart to praiſe thee for them. O let thy glory be mine end and aim. Let me and mine be thine---I humbled---thou exalted. Let thy graces and gifts bring thee in a conſtant revenue of praiſe. And may thine increaſing goodneſs be joined with a conſtant increaſe of humility, that my heart and all within me may bleſs and praiſe thy holy name to day, and for ever. *Amen.* And

Let this appear in my whole behaviour to others. This is another bleſſed fruit of humility.

It

It has an influence over the believer's intercourſe with mankind, and renders his tempers and manners loving and amiable. Pride was not made for man, and yet it is in all men, and is the chief parent of human woe. It ſets people above their place, and makes them think, that they could ſupport the greateſt fortunes, and are able to manage the moſt difficult affairs. Others, as proud as they, deny them their fancied ſuperiority. Hence come wars and fightings, public and private. The ſweet grace of humility is ſent from heaven to relieve thoſe diſtreſſes: for into whatever boſom it enters, it renders men kind to one another, tender hearted, ready to every good word and work. Thus runs the divine exhortation: "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another "with brotherly love, in honor preferring one "another." This is heart-humility, which the holy Spirit requires, and which he beſtows. He brings his diſciples into humble ſubjection to God, and then to one another: which has the moſt happy effects upon public, ſocial, and private happineſs. How would theſe flouriſh, if all men were of a meek and quiet ſpirit? But there is none of this among the unconverted, and alas! how little is there among believers? How often are they found in the proud ſpirit of the world? acting contrary to the lowly ſpirit of Jeſus. And yet it is not for want of precept, nor for want of promiſed help: but it is becauſe they are not

walking

walking by faith, as becometh the goſpel, nor out of love to God's glory ſtudying to recommend humility by their practice. Obſerve, O my ſoul, the remedy provided of God for the ſubduing of all ſelfiſh tempers, and pray that it may be effectual in thy life and converſation. "Do "ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain, The "ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy: But "God giveth more grace, wherefore he ſaith, "God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto "the humble." This ſcripture cannot ſpeak in vain: for fallen man is certainly ſuch as he is here deſcribed. The ſpirit that dwelleth in him, in his own nature, luſteth to envy---a paſſion made up of pride and diſcontent---offended with God---and diſpleaſed with the bleſſings, which he beſtows upon men. It is an enemy to the love both of God and man, and tranſgreſſes the law of both tables. Pride brought it into heaven, and the fallen angels brought it into this world. Ever ſince it entered by ſin, natural corruption breaks out very much in envy. But God giveth more grace, to conquer this paſſion, than ſinful nature has to put it forth. He not only gives grace to pardon it, but alſo more grace to ſubdue it: ſo that envy loſes its dominion in the reign of grace. We cannot ſubdue, any more than we can pardon, envy, pride, and ſuch paſſions, but grace is almighty. Want ever ſo much, uſe ever ſo much, God has ſtill more for you. And he gives more, when the creature is humbled enough

enough to take it out of the hands of his mercy. Thus he overcomes envy: "For he reſiſteth the "proud," he is at open war with them, and they with him. Pride lifts up the creature againſt the Creator; and puts it upon ſeeking happineſs out of God: this is reſiſting his ſovereignty, attacking his providence, and oppoſing his law. He is concerned to pull ſuch rebels down, and he ſays their pride goeth before deſtruction: "But he giveth grace unto the "humble"---he gives them grace to humble them, and being emptied, he delights to fill them: for then they are diſpoſed to receive his grace, and to value it. Whatever God gives, the humble give it back again to him. They have the bleſſing, he has the praiſe: which is the juſt tribute due to him for his gifts. And he gives more grace, where he can get more glory. Thus he ſubdues ſelf conceit with its various proud workings. And as grace reigns over them, humility prevails; which has a friendly aſpect towards mankind. It keeps brotherly love in the heart, and tends mightily to the practice of every ſocial virtue. Humility ſuffereth long and is kind, humility envieth not; humility vaunteth not itſelf; is not puffed up; doth not behave itſelf unſeemly; ſeeketh not her own; is not eaſily provoked; thinketh no evil.

Conſider, O my ſoul, thoſe motives to an holy walk. Put them all together. Weigh them carefully, again and again. Do it faithfully as

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in the preſence of God. And then try, whether thou art walking in the way of duty with a free ſpirit. Doſt thou proceed upon evangelical or upon legal principles? Doſt thou ſerve God for wages, or for love? Examine thy heart. God looks chiefly at it How is it in duty? Is thine obedience to juſtify thee in the leaſt, or does it ſpring from a ſenſe of thy being juſtified freely and fully? Art thou going about to eſtabliſh thine own righteouſneſs, or doſt thou ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God? Art thou working from life, or for life? I require thee to examine diligently by the light of the word, and by the teaching of the holy Spirit, what thy motives are: For there is no acceptable obedience, but what is done in faith: Whatſoever is not of faith, is ſin. If thou art acting aright the love of Chriſt is conſtraining thee to obedience. Thou art living under the influence of free-grace. Thy conſcience is at peace with God. Thou haſt ſweet liberty to ſerve him without fear. Thy heart delights in his ſervice, and love makes his ways the joy of thy ſoul. Thou knoweſt what Jacob felt, when he ſerved ſeven years for Rachel, and they ſeemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her. A goſpel-ſpirit does the ſame to God—love makes long ſervice ſhort—and hard ſervice eaſy. Nothing is pain, which love does. And this is goſpel obedience. It is faith working by love, which refines duty into a grace; the command-

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ments are exalted into privileges; the ordinances become happy means of fellowſhip with God. The believer meets God in them, and by free converſe he exerciſes and improves his love. He draws near to God, and God draws near to him in prayer, in praiſe, in hearing the word, at the Lord's ſupper, and in all ſabbath duties. In theſe ways God manifeſts his gracious preſence, and the believer rejoices in it. God communicates his graces, and the believer receives them with thankfulneſs. O my ſoul, pray before duty for much of this communion with God in it. Seek it as the one great end of all duty. And if thou findeſt it, bleſs and praiſe the goodneſs of thy God. But ſtill ſeek to be more ſpiritual and evangelical, that the fruits of thy fellowſhip with God may appear in thy practice of the duties of the ſecond table. Love to God will manifeſt itſelf by love to men: For the holy Spirit teaches all his diſciples to love one another, and he teaches effectually. He not only makes them underſtand, what brotherly love is, but he alſo gives it. They become partakers of the grace, and are enabled to practiſe it. Thus he recommends and enforces his leſſons. He renders his ſcholars kind to one another, and tender hearted. He puts forth his mighty power, and ſubdues the vile ſelfiſh tempers of the old man, and brings into uſe the benevolent tempers of the new man. While he carries on the gracious work his diſciples grow more acquainted with themſelves,

themſelves, and learn heart humility. He makes them feel their fallen ſtate, their ſinfulneſs and their danger; in the ſenſe of their guilt and of their diſtance from God they are willing to receive Chriſt for their whole ſalvation, and then to enjoy in him, all the bleſſings of the Father's love in earth and heaven.

If thou findeſt it difficult, O my ſoul, to walk according to this rule: If to obey from love to God—to love men for God's ſake---and in the ſenſe of thine own vileneſs to be humbled to the duſt---If theſe be hard leſſons; conſider what makes them ſo. Where is the difficulty? Is it not in thyſelf? And is it not chiefly in thy not uſing and not bringing into practice the principles advanced in the former chapters. Duty muſt be hard, if the ſpring of obedience be not in motion; but if this act freely, then all will go on well.

Thy whole conduct through life depends upon the nature of the ſalvation, of which thou art a partaker by grace. Conſider it attentively. The growing knowledge of it will engage thine affections to a willing obedience. Is it not a complete ſalvation---an abſolutely perfect work---yea the greateſt work of God? Becauſe all the reſt come from it, and lead to it. Is it not the infinitely wiſe contrivance of the eternal Three, for which everlaſting glory is to be given to every divine attribute? When every other work of God ſhall ceaſe, for this all heaven will to

eternity be aſcribing honor and bleſſing and praiſe to Father, Son, and Spirit. Attend, O my ſoul, to the ſcripture account of this ſalvation. Review the glory of it. Read again and again the revealed deſcriptions of it, till thy heart be ſatisfied, that this ſalvation is as perfect and complete, as the Lord God almighty could make it. This is its character. Haſt thou ſtudied it well, and art thou well grounded and eſtabliſhed in the belief of it? Mind: this is the foundation. If this totter, ſo will all the ſuper-ſtructure. O pray then, and be earneſt in prayer that God would enlarge thy views of the infinitely glorious and everlaſtingly perfect ſalvation, which is in Chriſt Jeſus.

As thou groweſt more acquainted with it, thou wilt ſee leſs reaſon to be diſcouraged at the experience of what thou art in thyſelf. It is a ſalvation for ſinners---ſuch as thou art---and no way differing from thee. Only when they are called to the knowledge of the truth, they are acquainted with their fallen ſtate, are made ſenſible of their helpleſſneſs and of their miſery, but are made willing to caſt their ſouls at God's command upon the Lord Jeſus, truſting to the peace which he made by the blood of the croſs. And art not thou in the happy number of theſe redeemed ſinners? Doſt not thou believe the record, which God hath given of his Son, and look upon it as thy lawful warrant---to make uſe of what is laid up in the fulneſs of Jeſus---thine

to take freely---thine to uſe fully---the more the better---thine for receiving, without any condition or any qualification? He loves to give, and without money or moneys worth. He thinks himſelf honored by the penſioners of his grace, who bring nothing to recommend themſelves, but their ſins and miſeries, and yet truſt in his promiſed relief. Herein he glories. When they come to him believing, he beſtows his royal gifts upon every one of them: And ſo far as they believe, he withholds nothing that is needful for their holy walk in the way of duty.

Theſe are the principles, which thou art to bring into practice. Carry them, O my ſoul, into every act of obedience. Go to prayer and every duty with this faith, that thou art in Chriſt, and in him a partaker of his finiſhed ſalvation. Then the Father's love to the will be manifeſt, and thou wilt have ſweet fellowſhip with him in all thine approaches to the throne---Whatever thou undertakeſt, forget not this leading truth. If thou loſe ſight of it, thou wilt get into darkneſs: If thou art not influenced by it, thou wilt be brought into bondage. Upon this abſolutely perfect ſalvation thou art to live by faith upon earth, and thou wilt have nothing elſe to live upon by ſenſe in heaven. Truſting to the complete work of Jeſus thou art to walk with thy God in time, as thou wilt follow the Lamb in eternity, receiving all out of his fulneſs. O view him in this light, and it will have

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the happieſt effects upon thy daily walk. While thou art receiving from him grace for grace, thou wilt live with him in ſweet friendſhip, duty will be the way and means of enjoying the love of thy divine friend, and the more thou art in his company the more delightful will be the way of his commandments. Theſe are thy privileges. Read the promiſes concerning them. Call to mind what thy Father in Jeſus has engaged to give his children. Has he not provided grace ſufficient for them? And is it not for his honor, as well as thy profit, that he ſhould give both the will and the power to walk humbly with him? O plead his promiſes. Bind him with his faithfulneſs. Be importunate with him, and pray without ceaſing. Let this be thy daily plea.

O my God, order my walk according to thy holy word. It is thy mind and will, that I ſhould love thee with all my heart, and ſoul, and mind, and ſtrength, and my neighbour as myſelf: but I am not ſufficient for theſe things. There is no pure love in my ſoul by nature. Every affection in me is turned from the Creator to the creature. I am in bondage, a ſlave to luſt, ſold under ſin. I cannot love thee, infinitely lovely as thou art, until thou break my bonds aſunder, and ſet my ſoul at liberty. But being now redeemed from guilt and fear, I am become thy freeman; and for the unſpeakable redemption that is in Jeſus, thou wouldſt have

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me to ſerve thee. Bleſſed be thy holy name for requiring mine obedience upon this ſweet motive, —" I am the Lord your God, who brought you " out of the land of Egypt and out of the houſe " of bondage." On this account obey me: becauſe I am the Lord your God, and I ſtand related to you, as your redeemer from ſlavery. O my gracious God and Father, I deſire upon this motive to keep thy commandments. I believe thou art my God in Jeſus, and through him I have redemption from bondage to my ſins and enemies. With this free ſpirit would I always go to duty: but I cannot walk in this liberty, any more than I could at firſt attain it, without thy grace. O my God, let the ſpirit of adoption abide with me, that he may draw me nearer to thee in thy ways and ordinances, and I may in them enjoy more of thy preſence, and of the light of thy countenance. Thee I ſeek in them. Thou art the end of all ways and means: and if they lead me not to thee, I go empty away. Gracious God, make thy commandments the joy of my heart, and let them be the means of keeping up holy intercourſe and happy fellowſhip with thee. This my heart pants after. Duty without this is nothing worth. I wait in thine appointed ways for the viſits of thy grace, hoping to grow in knowledge and faith, in hope and love. The communion, which I have enjoyed, has increaſed my longing. My ſoul is a thirſt for God, praying to be more with thee,

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and more like thee. And is not this what thou requireſt, and what thou haſt promiſed to do for me? Grant me then, my gracious God, the prayer of my heart. In all my duties let me enjoy thy preſence, and communications of thy love. Let me do them in faith, and with a ſingle eye to thy glory. Let me be thus ſpiritual and heavenly minded in them, that I may grow up into Chriſt Jeſus in all things.

And I deſire, holy Father, to grow in love to thee, that I may manifeſt the fruits of it by my love to mankind. Pardon every ſelfiſh temper, which is oppoſite to the love of the brethren: And teach me to love them, as thou haſt loved me. Whatever thou haſt promiſed, fulfil in me. Make me, O thou Spirit of love, like the loving Jeſus. Give me his benevolent tempers, and help me to imitate his beneficent actions. Let his love to me be the pattern of my love to them. Since thou haſt in much mercy made me a child of light, O let me ſhine before men, that they may ſee and feel my good works, and may glorify thee for them. And the more thou doeſt in me, and by me, humble me ſtill more, O my God. Keep me meek and lowly, always ready to give the glory of all my mercies to the Three in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom be equal honor and praiſe for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The believer goes on his way rejoicing in God.

HAPPY is the man, to whom it is given on the behalf of Chriſt to believe. He has the bleſſing of peace. He is reconciled to God through faith in the blood of Jeſus: And he is freely juſtified through faith in the righteouſneſs of Jeſus. The Father has accepted him in his beloved Son, and it is the joy of his ſoul to know it; therefore he loves God, becauſe God firſt loved him. In the enjoyment of this love he finds his heaven begun. By the ſame Spirit, who manifeſted it and ſhed it abroad in his heart, he is kept ſeeking for more diſcoveries of it. In every appointed means he waits. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, ſo panteth his ſoul after more of the preſence of God, and of the light of his loving countenance. Having a command-----Seek ye my face----- he obeys it from his heart: but his chief view in obedience is to behold the face of the Lord turned to him in love. He wants fellowſhip with God in duty, which highly ennobles and alſo endears it to him. He performs it in faith, and in a free ſpirit. He goes to it, as a beloved

child to a moſt loving parent: and his heavenly Father meets him in it, receives him graciouſly, ſpeaks to his heart, and makes him ſenſible, that he can deny him no manner of thing, which is good. Hence the ways of duty become ways of pleaſantneſs. The farther he advances in them, and the more ſpiritual he grows in the performance of them, he finds clearer communications of his Father's grace and love, which ſtill increaſe his joy, and afford him ſurer earneſts, and happier foretaſtes of joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

As for the ungodly it is not ſo with them. They are always ſeeking after joy. They are buſy, and weary themſelves in the purſuit of it, but they cannot find it. While they are turned in heart from the Lord, they look downwards for it; where it is not. They expect it will ſpring out of the ground: and if they cannot diſcover it upon the ſurface, they will dig into the bowels of the earth for treaſures of hidden joy. But they diſquiet themſelves in vain. It is the ſovereign decree of the almighty, that nothing can make a ſinner truly happy but God in Chriſt: this they will not believe; and therefore they go from creature to creature, from object to object, enquiring, Where is the beſt joy to be found? Each promiſes them—it is in me. But each diſappoints them. And yet they go on, ſeeking it to-day in that very thing,

thing, which deluded them yeſterday. Yea, their fooliſh hearts are willingly deluded. They love to be purſuing what it is impoſſible they ſhould attain. If after many trials they find the emptineſs of one creature comfort, then they turn to another. And they will try the whole compaſs of beings and things, and will at laſt die in the trial, rather than ſeek for joy, where it is holy, perfect, and everlaſting.

The believer is ſaved from this vain purſuit. He has been convinced of the inſufficiency of the creature to make him happy. He has ſeen an end of all perfection in it. He can ſay with the royal preacher, "Vanity of vanities, all is va-"nity"—all is changeable and imperfect under the ſun; for the whole world lieth in wickedneſs and under the curſe. Deeply ſenſible of his error in having ſought for joy in the way of deſtruction, he now ſeeks it in the living God. Here he comes to the ſupreme good, the ſpring-head of true joy: and the ſtreams which he receives from thence are always in proportion to his faith. If this be ſtrong, there is great joy in the ſoul. If this be weak, joy is at a low ebb. The effect is according to the cauſe which produces it. Joy in God is the effect of faith; according to the apoſtle's prayer, "Now the God "of hope fill you with all joy in believing." There is a preſent fulneſs of joy which we have

by believing, as there is a future fulneſs of joy, which we ſhall have by ſenſe. So that joy riſes as believing does---fulneſs of believing brings in ALL joy---preſent enjoyment increaſing as the title to future is clear. The preſent is the divine pledge of the future, and is therefore given us, that by believing we may now rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of our ſalvation.

From hence it appears, how neceſſary it is to the believer's walking in joy, that his underſtanding ſhould be clearly enlightened with the knowledge of the doctrines of grace, and that his heart ſhould be eſtabliſhed in the belief of them. Thou canſt not, O my ſoul, review them too much, nor meditate upon them too long: for they enter into the very eſſence of all true joy. Study the goſpel method of making reconciliation for iniquity, which was the work of Immanuel, and of reconciling man to God, which is the work of the holy Spirit. Has he done this in thee, and art thou reconciled to God? Is thy conſcience at peace, is thine heart happy through faith in the atonement and righteouſneſs of thy Saviour? Art thou ſatisfied of thy perfect acceptance in the beloved? Doſt thou therefore obey thy Father out of gratitude, and go to duty to meet him, and to have fellowſhip with him in his love, and to glorify him for it. Doſt thou find his preſence? Is he with thee in all means,

means, and art thou ſeeking in them for nearer and more intimate communion with him? Since this is thy caſe, what return wilt thou make for ſuch ineſtimable favors? Surely thou wilt be glad in the Lord, and wilt rejoice in the God of thy ſalvation. Being at peace with him, and a partaker of his love---waiting for the eſtabliſhing of this peace and love in the way of obedience, and expecting more communion with thy God in the way of duty, who can have greater reaſon to rejoice? A ſaved ſinner, delivered by mere grace from wrath and hell, entitled to all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus, and already admitted to partake of them, may ſing and make melody in his heart all the way to heaven. And yet alas! how often art thou, O my ſoul, in heavineſs, walking in diſtreſs and caſt down, as if thy hope of rejoicing was in vain. And this is not thy caſe alone. It is too common. How many of God's children ſpend their days in a mournful frame, and ſeem to forget their high calling and undoubted title to the fulneſs of joy. Meditate a little upon the ingratitude of this behaviour, and may the goſpel motives to rejoice in the Lord always be the means of ſaving thee from an unthankful and mournful temper.

Firſt obſerve, he requires it of thee. The ſcripture ſpeaks much of the holy joy of believers, and calls for it. They are in duty bound to be

be glad in their God, as much as to pray to him: For he is always beſtowing mercies upon them, which demand their everlaſting tribute of thanks: and they cannot be thankful without being joyful. How cloſely were theſe two united in the holy Pſalmiſt? None ever more famous for praiſing God, or for rejoicing in God. What he felt himſelf he often exhorts the redeemed to experience: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: "for praiſe is comely for the upright: Light is "ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for the "upright in heart: Rejoice in the Lord ye "righteous, and give thanks at the remem-"brance of his holineſs:" Remember his righteouſneſs and holineſs, how great they are, and how great the grace is, which has found out a way to make you righteous and holy: Remember thoſe bleſſings with faith, and your hearts will be glad, and your mouth will praiſe God with joyful lips. What a ſenſe had the prophet of thoſe bleſſings, when he broke forth into this acknowledgment? "I will greatly rejoice in the "Lord, my ſoul ſhall be joyful in my God: for "he hath clothed me with the garments of ſal-"vation, he hath covered me with the robe of "righteouſneſs, as a bridegroom decketh him-"ſelf with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth "herſelf with her jewels." Theſe are the wedding garments, with which the heavenly bride-

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groom adorns his church, and in which he introduces her to the eternal banquet of love. Bleſſed are they who are called to the marriage ſupper of the Lamb. Bleſſed are they indeed: for they are arrayed in royal robes: their ſouls are all glorious with the beauties of Immanuel, with his divine righteouſneſs and matchleſs graces. They have reaſon now to rejoice greatly: For they ſhall ſoon come to Sion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy upon their heads: they ſhall obtain joy and gladneſs, and ſorrow and ſighing ſhall flee away for ever. Theſe ſcriptures prove evidently, that believers are called upon to rejoice: It is their bounden duty to be glad in their God, for they are not living like his children, and making up their happineſs in their Father's love, unleſs they are rejoicing in his rich and everlaſting bleſſings: For

Secondly, Joy ariſes from the ſenſe of ſome good. Joy in God ariſes from the ſenſe of his being our chief good, and of our intereſt in him. And this is the joy of faith: Which is not in the leaſt like the light frothy joy of the ſenſualiſt, nor the wanton mirth of the unthinking multitude. It is not drawn, as worldly joy is, from vain periſhing things, but from the word of God, which ſtandeth faſt for ever. It ſprings from the revelation of grace and mercy in Jeſus; and from giving credit to it. Whoever honors its teſtimony,

as the truth of God, will be convinced, that he truſting to the atonement of Jeſus ſhall never periſh, and truſting to the righteouſneſs of Jeſus ſhall have everlaſting life. Hence come joy and peace in believing. The conſcience is reconciled to God, and is at peace. The heart is made ſenſible of the love of God, and rejoices in him. This was the experience of the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael in the 33d Pſalm: "Our heart ſhall re-"joice in the Lord, BECAUSE we have truſted "in his holy name." This is a good reaſon. Whoever truſt in God will certainly rejoice in God: For by truſting in his word, and by depending upon his faithfulneſs, he cannot be diſappointed of the good things, which God has promiſed. We have an inſtance of this in a trembling deſpairing ſinner, who had drawn his dagger, and was plunging it into his heart. In that moment he heard of Jeſus. It was given him to feel his want of a Saviour---Sirs, ſays he to Paul and Silas, what muſt I do to be ſaved? And they ſaid, Believe *in the name of* the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved and thy houſe. And they preached unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his houſe. And he took them the ſame hour of the night and waſhed their ſtripes, and was baptized, he and all his ſtraightway. And when he had brought them into his houſe, he ſet meat before them,

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and REJOICED BELIEVING. O what a happy change was here, and made by believing! The ſelf-murderer forgets his bloody deſign, and drops his dagger. He hears of a pardon and believes. His black deſpair gives way to ſweet peace in God. His miſery ends in the knowledge of a joyful ſalvation. How bleſſed are they that believe! God has pronounced them, and God will make them bleſſed. There is no miſery deſerved, but by faith they are ſaved from it; and no good promiſed, but by faith they may now enjoy it: They have therefore all the reaſon to rejoice, that any perſon can have on this ſide of heaven. For

Thirdly, This joy is diſtinguiſhed from the vain joy of the world, by its author. It is the gift of God. It is one of the graces of the Spirit of God. St. Paul ſays, "The fruit of the Spi-"rit is love, joy," &c.---love to God, and then rejoicing in God. When the Spirit of adoption enters into any heart, he manifeſts by believing the love of the Father, and thereby excites it into holy joy. He comes to make the ſoul happy in its return to God. It is the very end for which he is ſent from the Father and the Son, and therefore it is called the joy of the holy Ghoſt. It is his fruit, produced by his influence, and kept by his power. It is like himſelf, of a ſpiritual and heavenly nature---a pure affection---in all goodneſs, and righteouſneſs, and truth.

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He refines it from creature-delight, and exalts it above ſenſual pleaſure: For it is the reſult of nearneſs to God, and the effect of fellowſhip with him: Which is

Fourthly, another bleſſed ingredient in the joy of believers. It has God for its object. It is joy in God as their God, their ſupreme good, known, believed in, and enjoyed. The holy Spirit has conſecrated their hearts for fellowſhip with him. He has brought a free pardon for paſt apoſtacy, and full power to dethrone creature-love: And he abides in their hearts to ſubdue it. He enlightens their underſtandings to ſee the vanity of the creature, and the fulneſs of God, and he enables them to reject every thing, that promiſes them happineſs, if they cannot enjoy God in it. Thus he keeps their hearts chaſte and fixed upon God. Their joy becomes ſimple, as their faith is: For this looks at the finiſhed ſalvation, and reſting intirely upon it ſees God perfectly reconciled; thereby it lays a ſure foundation for their joy in God: Becauſe they now know him by faith to be their God, and can ſee their intereſt in all the bleſſings of his love in Jeſus. This is the fountain head of joy, from whence flow rivers of pleaſure for evermore. The nearer they live to the fountain head, the more communion they have with God: Their hearts become purer and holier, and their joys are more ſpiritual and heavenly.

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This is the only remedy for the miſeries, with which the world abounds. Men are uneaſy: ſeek for joy: and cannot find it: becauſe they ſeek where it is not. They go to broken ciſterns, which cannot hold it. They are diſappointed, and wonder. But ſtill go on, ſpending their days in this vain purſuit. They do not attain any true joy. It flies from them, and at laſt they lie down in ſorrow. What thanks then art thou bound, O my ſoul, to return unto thy God, who has ſaved thee from this deluſion! What a mercy is it, that thou haſt been led to the fountain of joy! O live near it, and from it derive all thy ſtreams. Seek them all in God, and ſeek them in faith upon the warrant of the divine promiſe. He has ſaid, "The meek ſhall increaſe their joy in the Lord, they ſhall have it, and increaſe it. The more meek and lowly thou art, the more wilt thou be joyful in God. Pray then for growing humility, that thou mayeſt experience the ſweetneſs of this ſcripture---"Rejoice "in the Lord always, and again I ſay, rejoice" ---there is always a matter of joy in the Lord. What a fulneſs did he find, who teſtifies of it thus---"My joy ſhall be in the Lord---God is the "gladneſs of my joy---all my ſprings are in thee "---for thou art my exceeding joy." Happy prince! All his ſprings came from God and led him to God. He did not draw his happineſs from the brooks, but from the fountain. The

brooks

brooks dry up, but the fountain cannot. He did not rejoice in his crown and dignity, in his victories and treaſures, or in any worldly good. He enjoyed God in them, who was the joy of his heart. He only valued the gifts, for the ſake of the giver: for he made uſe of them by faith; and then they were the means of bringing him near to God, and of keeping up communion with God. Whatever does this is a great bleſſing. And every thing ſhould do this to a believer. While he lives, like a child of God, he exerciſes his faith for ſpirituals and temporals; and his heavenly Father bleſſes him according to his word, wherein he hath cauſed him to put his truſt, and gives him continual matter for joy and thankfulneſs.

This is the portion of the Lord's people. He has entailed it on them. It comes to them by inheritance. And thou art bound, O my ſoul, to make uſe of it. Thy duty and intereſt call upon thee to enjoy much of it. Thy gratitude for the exceeding great mercies of the Father's love cannot be ſo properly ſhewn, as by rejoicing in him: for the thankful heart cannot but be joyful. It feels happy in God. My meditation of him, ſays a grateful ſoul, ſhall be ſweet, I will be glad in the Lord. This is a juſt tribute, which the Father expects, and which the holy Spirit enables his children to return him. "Bleſſed is the people that know the joy-

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" ful ſound, they ſhall walk, O Lord, in the " light of thy countenance: IN THY NAME " ſhall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righ- " teouſneſs ſhall they be exalted." Theſe are great privileges, which God has promiſed and does beſtow upon his people. It is true they do not all alike rejoice with great joy; but they all ought. When their faith is weak, their joy is little. But they have the ſame right to believe, and to rejoice in believing. There is the ſame proviſion made for the whole family and houſhold of faith. They are intereſted in the ſame covenant, have the ſame promiſes, and the ſame faithfulneſs to make them good. They have perfect ſecurity given them, that they may truſt and not be afraid. The people who know the joyful ſound of a free grace ſalvation, have good reaſon to believe without doubt or wavering. By ſuch a faith they will ſee God perfectly reconciled to them, and will behold the light of his countenance ſhining on them in love. A bleſſed ſight! To ſee it clearly is glory begun, to walk in it is glory increaſing. What is it but heaven, to rejoice all the day long? But then it muſt be IN THY NAME, in the incarnate word, in Jehovah Jeſus; by faith in whoſe righteouſneſs they ſhall be exalted, as high as a creature can be---being juſtified freely and fully they have acceſs into this perfect grace wherein they ſtand, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God: and not only

only ſo, but they rejoice in the way to glory, in tribulations alſo, knowing that all things are working together for their preſent, and for their eternal enjoyment of God.

For their encouragement thus to rejoice in the Lord he has promiſed them, that the joy which he gives ſhall not be taken away, which is

Fifthly, Another great privilege. True joy is the gift of God. Is a grace of the Spirit of God. It has God for its author, and God for its object: and it has this prerogative annexed to it, that no one can deſtroy this gift of grace. The Lord Chriſt declares, that he will not ſuffer any creature to take away what he beſtows. What a rich cordial was this to his dejected apoſtles? They were mourning upon account of his leaving them and were ſadly caſt down, as men without hope. But he revives their drooping hearts with a promiſe---" I will ſee you again, and your heart " ſhall rejoice, and your joy no one taketh from " you." This is indeed ſtrong conſolation: for it is one of the ſtreams, which maketh glad the city of God---a ſtream that never fails---it runs out of the ocean of free grace, and none can ſtop its running back into it. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you, ſays Jeſus. The world giveth empty joys, continueth them by an uncertain tenure, at laſt takes away all its gifts, and leaves its deluded votary to ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Whereas Chriſt gives what is

truly good, ſolid, and laſting. His gifts are without repentance. He is of one mind in continuing, as well as in giving: for his motives are in and of himſelf, and always the ſame. His own mere love, his free grace, and the good pleaſure of his own will diſpoſe him to give and to continue his favors: and his one end is his own glory. Therefore he will not take away the joy, which he has given, and he will ſuffer no one to take it away. He ſecures by his power what he gives by his love. Such is the believer's right to rejoice in the Lord always. His title is indefeaſible. God has freely given him in Chriſt all the good that can make him happy: and he enjoys it, and is happy, ſo far as he lives by faith. While he goes on from faith to faith his joys increaſe. Growing faith brings him in a richer harveſt of joy. And he is commanded ſtill to proceed, until his joy be full, which is a

Sixth privilege, peculiar to joy in God. Other ſprings fail. They are often dry. And when they run the fulleſt, he that drinks of their water thirſts the more. But joy in God has a ſatisfying fulneſs. The fountain is always full, yea is always running over: and all the ſtreams bring happy peace, and holy joy. The more a man drinks thereof the more ſober and ſpiritual he becomes: for whatever flows out of this fountain is grace, ſanctifying grace; the more we partake of it we grow more like it. There

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is in it the divine property of conforming and aſſimilating us to itſelf: for it weakens the corruption of nature, and ſtrengthens the faculties of the new-man, and as theſe grow ſtronger, they cleave cloſer to God, and have more fellowſhip with him. By which means they partake more of his joy. A happy partaker of it declares---"In thy preſence is the fulneſs of joy," and therefore he prays---"Make me full of joy with "thy countenance"---the preſence of God with me, and his loving countenance ſhining upon me is the fulleſt joy upon earth. And this comes from the grace of the holy Spirit, and is received by faith. Our Lord ſays to his diſciples---"Theſe "things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy "might remain in you, and that your joy might "be full." His end in ſpeaking was to give them good reaſon to rejoice, and to continue rejoicing, and if they received what he ſpake with full aſſurance, as they ought to do, it would produce in them a fulneſs of joy. And this would be ſo much to his honor, and to their profit, that he commands them to aſk it of the Father in his name---"Aſk, and ye ſhall receive, "that your joy may be full." To the ſame purpoſe the apoſtle John, treating of the perſon of God incarnate, through whom we have fellowſhip with the Father in all the bleſſings of his love, ſays, "Theſe things write we unto you, "that your joy may be full." His deſign in writing

writing was to lead them to nearer fellowſhip with the bleſſed Trinity, and to ſtir them up to ſeek in it their fulneſs of joy: and they have it full, who ſatisfied of their title to the Father's bleſſings, are receiving them freely out of the Son's fulneſs by the grace of the Spirit. It becometh them well to rejoice: for in the ſame bleſſings, there is fulneſs of joy for evermore, joy unſpeakable, and full of glory.

Put all theſe conſiderations together, and then ſee, O my ſoul, what a rich proviſion thy God has made for the joy of thy heart. Admire and adore him for his great ſalvation, for delivering thee from ſin and ſorrow, and for the free gift of righteouſneſs and life eternal. To pardon, to juſtify, to glorify ſuch an one, as thou art, O what divine and infinite grace! What wilt thou return him for manifeſting his love to thee, and for engaging thy love to him? How great is thy debt for admitting thee to fellowſhip with him, as thy God and Father, and for the gracious communications of his love to thee in Jeſus! What a ſubject is here before thee for delightful praiſe! Look at it in any true light, thou haſt reaſon to be glad with exceeding great joy. God, the infinite fountain of good, is thy God. He rejoices in thee, therefore thou ſhouldſt rejoice in him. He has loved thee freely: how canſt thou be ſenſible of this without loving him? His love has bleſſed thee with all ſpiritual bleſſings in

Chriſt Jeſus; whilſt thou art receiving them out of his fulneſs, how canſt thou refuſe to thank him with joyful lips? he ſays, that he rejoices over thee to do thee good; the belief of this ſhould fill thy heart with joy and gladneſs. Indeed there is nothing in God, but what ſhould be to thee matter of rejoicing. His faithfulneſs and juſtice are on thy ſide, as well as his never failing compaſſions: for he is thy God, thy covenant God, he has given his Son for thee and his Spirit to thee: by his grace thou haſt been called to enjoy fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, and to partake of their covenant bleſſings. It is thy privilege to be improving this fellowſhip, and even upon earth to be taſting of the joys of heaven. May thy faith bring thee in a rich feaſt, yea a fulneſs of joy till thy cup run over with the rivers of pleaſure, which are at God's right-hand for evermore.

Remember, O my ſoul, it is thy duty and thy privilege thus to rejoice in God. It is thine intereſt, and thy happineſs. Thy God requires it of thee, as the grateful acknowledgment of his favors: They are all of grace, ineſtimably rich and everlaſting. He would have thee to honor him for the gifts by rejoicing in the giver. Joy is the ſenſe of his goodneſs to thee: and canſt thou receive the preſent, and live in hopes of the eternal bleſſings of his goodneſs, and yet be without a joyful ſenſe of them? Examine well, and

and try thyſelf. How is thy heart? Is it happy in God? Is it happy in nothing but God? What ever a man puts his truſt in, from that he expects his happineſs. In what then doſt thou truſt? Certainly thou wilt ſay, my truſt is in the mercy of God for ever and ever. And ſhould not he be the only matter of thy joy, who is the only ground of thy faith? If he be, then why art thou ſo often caſt down, O my ſoul, and why art thou ſo diſquieted within me? How many dejections, what great ſorrows, and what frequent heavineſs doſt thou experience. From whence come they? Joy is ſown for thee. The ſower is the Son of man. The Father has promiſed it, and beſtowed it on thee for thy portion: thou haſt been called by grace, and the joy in believing is thy birthright. What is the reaſon thou art not happy in thy God, and rejoicing in him always? Search diligently for the cauſe. Depend upon it there is a great miſtake ſomewhere. The ſcriptures cannot be broken, which treat of continual joy in God. The promiſes cannot fail. The promiſer is faithful: And yet thou art not always a partaker of the promiſed grace. How is this? O try to come to the bottom of this error. May the ſpirit of wiſdom lay it open to thee, and may thy ſorrow be turned into joy.

Perhaps thou art ſeeking for ſome reaſon to rejoice in thyſelf. This rejoicing is not good, although it be very common. It has a bad motive:

tive: it comes from pride. The end is bad: it is to exalt and aggrandize SELF, which was man's ſin and ruin. It is forbidden in ſcripture--He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord. If thou couldſt find ſomething in thyſelf to be pleaſed with, thou wouldſt then rejoice in thy pride. Sorrow for not finding it may bring thee right; becauſe it may be the means of ſhewing thee, that thou haſt nothing of thine own to look at with ſelf-complacency. What haſt thou, that thou haſt not received? And if thou haſt received it, why wouldſt thou glory, as if thou hadſt not received it? Haſt thou any thing of thine own but ſin? Who gave thee grace, and made thee to differ from others? Was it not God? Did not all come from the good pleaſure of his own will? He ſaw nothing good in thee at firſt to move him to be gracious, and what he continues is to the praiſe of the glory of his own grace. If thou haſt loſt the ſight of theſe truths, no wonder thou ſhouldſt go mourning. God will not vouchſafe his joy to them, who ſacrifice to their own net, and burn incenſe to their own drag. He humbles, and fills the humble with good things, but he ſendeth the rich empty away. The rich rob him of his glory, and he refuſes them his grace. Watch therefore over thy proud legal heart. Be jealous over it with a godly jealouſy. And intreat the holy Spirit to bring down every high thought in it, that thou

mayeſt

mayeſt exalt God, and he may exalt thee. Remember the promiſe---" The meek ſhall increaſe " their joy in the Lord:" ſeek the fulfilling of this: for joy in him is the death of ſelf-ſeeking and ſelf-pleaſing. O beg of God then to keep thee meek and lowly, that thou mayeſt be willing to live upon Jeſus by faith, and to receive all the joy out of his fulneſs of joy.

Perhaps thou art mourning under a ſenſe of thy ſinful nature, and groaning under the burden of indwelling ſin, as holy Paul did, and as all the dear children of God do, when they are in their right mind. This is godly ſorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. It is the true poverty of ſpirit, to which the Lord hath promiſed his bleſſing. Indeed every one that has it is bleſſed, becauſe it is not only conſiſtent with the trueſt joy, but alſo is the very proper temper of mind, in which it is preſerved and increaſed. They that ſow in tears ſhall reap in joy. Self-knowledge is the breaking up of the fallow ground, and is the ploughing and harrowing of it, thereby making it fit for the good ſeed, and to receive the enlivening influence of the heavens. The more any man knows of himſelf, the greater reaſon will he have to ſeek the harveſt of his joys in God, and ſeeking by faith he will find them. If he be in the deepeſt humiliation, he will be then beſt diſpoſed to rejoice in God. This holy joy generally riſes higheſt, when ſelf is loweſt:

loweſt: as the higheſt tide is always after the loweſt ebb. Remember this, O my ſoul, in the moſt abaſing views of thy fallen nature, and it will lead thee to ſeek, and in believing to find that in God, which thou haſt not in thyſelf. The empty, and none but the empty, may be filled with his joy. Let every diſcovery of thine emptineſs lead thee to truſt more in the ſalvation of God, and to enjoy more of its bleſſings. And then thou mayeſt be with Paul, always ſorrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrow for ſelf is the greateſt friend to joy in God. Self-loathing is accompanied with the ſweeteſt delight in God. May the apoſtle's experience herein be thine—"We are of the circumciſion, who worſhip God "in the ſpirit, and rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and "have no confidence in the fleſh." O pray for the ſame grace, and thou wilt find, that the leſs confidence there is in the fleſh, the more rejoicing there will be in Chriſt Jeſus.

Perhaps thou haſt been tempted to ſeek for joy in ſome creature comfort, and haſt not received it as the gift of God, nor enjoyed it by faith, nor returned him his glory. Thou waſt looking below God for happineſs, and expecting it from ſome other object. The world had herein enſnared thy heart. There is not a greater enemy to the children of God: becauſe it has objects ſuited to their ſenſes, and capable of gratifying them; by which the world is always trying

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ing to engage their affections, and always ſucceeds, when they are not living by the faith of the Son of God: for this is the only victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. See, whether thy ſorrow did not ſpring from ſome worldly diſappointment. Thou hadſt dropt thy ſhield, and waſt falling aſleep in Dalilah's lap: but awaking didſt find the pleaſure turned into pain. This pain may be very profitable. It ſhould convince thee of thy dreadful miſtake in leaving God for the world, and ſhould ſtop up thy way for the future. Now thou ſeeſt the need of being cautioned—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: for all things out of Chriſt are under the curſe. There can be no bleſſedneſs in them. The whole world lieth in wickedneſs: it cannot make thee happy, any more than hell can. But it is thy privilege to be delivered from this preſent evil world, and to be ſaved from the love of it. This is a bleſſed part of thy ſalvation. Expect it by faith. The victory is obtained; ſee thy ſhare in it. "I have "overcome the world," ſays Jeſus. Almighty Lord, overcome it in me, as thou haſt overcome it for me.

But remember, O my ſoul, whatever be the real cauſe of thy ſorrowing, there is joy in God, and for thee: becauſe he is thy God; in whom there is nothing to make thee ſorrowful, but every thing which can poſſibly give thee true joy.

joy. The bleſſed Trinity are in covenant for thee and for thy ſalvation. And it is thy bounden duty truſting to the finiſhed work of the Son to rejoice in the love of the Father. In the peace of thy conſcience and in the love of thy heart thou art required to have fellowſhip with the Father and the Son, and to be always giving thanks to the holy Spirit for this fellowſhip. Every enjoyment of their covenant bleſſings in earth is a foretaſte of heaven, and a pledge of joy unſpeakable. What thou haſt now by faith, thou ſhalt certainly have in everlaſting poſſeſſion: for there is a ſure foundation laid in the covenant for thee to build thy hopes upon of rejoicing evermore. Thy Father has choſen thee and accepted thee in his Son. He has ſet his heart upon doing thee good, and he changeth not. His loving kindneſs is like himſelf. He has drawn thee by his Spirit to believe in his love, and he has promiſed to love thee unto the end. He has freely given thee all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt Jeſus, and he reſerves the full enjoyment of them for heaven. Nothing can rob thee of them: becauſe he keeps them by his power for thee, and thee for them. How ſhould this help to fill up the meaſure of thy joys? The Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort is thine, with all that his love can do to make thee happy. What canſt thou want, but more faith? The Lord increaſe

creaſe it, that thy heart and converſation may be more with him. As thine affections are ſet more on things above, the temptations to the love of the things below will be weakened. The ſweetneſs of heavenly communion will deaden thee to the charms of the world: yea, the world will be to thee as nothing, while God is ALL. And is he not all in all to thee? Conſider his nature, his perſonality, his covenant, his works, his graces and his bleſſings---view them in their greatneſs and goodneſs---thou haſt an intereſt in them all. His wiſdom contrives for thee---his providence watches over thee---his love waits to be gracious to thee---his holineſs and juſtice and truth are thy friends---all his attributes have engaged his power to bring thee to glory. The perfect ſalvation of Jeſus is thine. His Father is thy Father in him, and has nothing in his heart but love to thee: The holy Spirit has manifeſted it to thee in believing to be a perfect, unchangeable and everlaſting love. Whatever the Godhead has promiſed to give of happineſs is promiſed to thee: And thou doſt believe it, although thou art ſometimes in heavineſs through manifold temptations. But even then there is joy laid up for thee in God. Joy enough in the fountain. It is always full: only thy faith draws out of it ſparingly. Enough in God to turn thy ſorrow into joy, if faith did its perfect work.

O for

O for more faith, that thou mayeſt have more joy in believing.

From whatever cauſe then, O my ſoul, thy ſorrow aroſe, it certainly did not ſpring from any thing, which faith diſcovered to be in God. Be aſſured of this: And learn to improve thy ſorrow about other things, ſo as to ſee thy need of truſting more and of rejoicing more in God. If thy ſorrow be lawful, coming from a ſight and ſenſe of thy ſinfulneſs, there is good reaſon thou ſhouldſt abhor thyſelf and repent in duſt and aſhes: But this is alſo a good reaſon for joy in thy God: Becauſe the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite ſpirit. He gives to them the knowledge of ſalvation, and makes them glad with the joy of his countenance. Thus he delivers them from their ſins and ſorrows. He continues his loving kindneſs: Surely his goodneſs and mercy ſhall follow them all the days of their lives. When they are under temptations to ſeek for joy in other things, he hedges up their way that they cannot attain the expected good; or if they do, he embitters the enjoyment, and will not let them find any thing in the creature, but vanity and vexation. By which means he would teach them to derive all their joys from him, and from nothing but him. Wait, O my ſoul, and read, and hear, and pray, be diligent in all means

means for thine improvement in this divine leſſon. Seek the preſence of God, wherever thou art. Expect his bleſſing upon all that thou doeſt. Account his love thy chief happineſs, and be ſure, nothing can make thee happy, in which thou canſt not enjoy his love. If riches increaſe, the world ſmiles, health be granted thee, relations are kind, and all things go well, ſet not thy heart upon them. Look at the bountiful hand which gives, and depend on the grace, which ſanctifies thoſe things. They are not worth having, but as they come from, and lead to, God, and ſo may be ſpiritually improved. If thou canſt live by faith, and enjoy God in them, then they are real bleſſings: for then thou wilt receive them as his gifts and uſe them to his praiſe; thou wilt eye his goodneſs in them, and admire him for them. And while he continues them, thou wilt be dependent on his grace to keep thy heart from idolatry, that thou mayeſt love the gifts, only for the ſake of the giver. Whatever thou art going to do, aſk thyſelf--- How can this be the means of my rejoicing in God? If it cannot, avoid it. If it come with all the world's flatteries, and make thee the greateſt offers of joy, fly from it. There is deadly poiſon under its gilded outſide. Lay it down as an invariable rule of thy walk, that nothing can do thee good, but what thou canſt enjoy God in. He is

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the only ſource of good. And every thing is to thee what he makes it: not what it is in itſelf; as ſuch, all is vanity. But it is good, when God makes it ſo. True joy is from him, and in him. It is the gift of his grace, and does not ſtop at any of the ſtreams, but goes up to the fountain-head, from whence they flow, and there finds its comforts, O my God, teach me thus to ſeek my joys in thee, and to make thee my crown of rejoicing.

For thine encouragement conſider, O my ſoul, what he did to the travellers gone before thee in the way to Sion: how he comforted them and made them glad with the joy of his countenance. He led them indeed through the valley of Baca, of mourning—the only high way to the kingdom; but they found a well in it, a fountain of living waters: they went on ſorrowing for their departure from God, but were made glad at their hearts in being brought back by his grace: therefore they wept rejoicing. Happy mourners! And haſt thou not the ſame reaſon, as they had, to ſorrow for thyſelf, and yet to be exceeding glad in God? Is not this alſo the caſe with all thy fellow travellers now upon the road? Their hearts are with God. He is their portion. His heaven is their home. They would not make up their happineſs in the accommodations by the way, but in God, their treaſure, their ſupreme good, and their everlaſting joy. Neither would they

they be ſtopt by the inconveniencies, which they may meet with: theſe, improved by faith, will tend to make them long more to be at home: for theſe will lead them to feel more of the true joy there is in God, and will thereby inſpire them with higher ſtrains of praiſe and thankfulneſs. So that every thing they meet with on the road will be ſanctified to them, and will diſpoſe them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Their Father and our Father out of the riches of his grace has not only given them matter of thanks, but has alſo provided the very words to be uſed by them. Many a weary traveller has found them a rich cordial. His ſpirits have been raiſed, his ſoul and all within made happy, while he was ſinging the ſweet and heavenly hymn. The goſpel prophet, who had ſeen the glory of Immanuel, and who was the honored penman of this divine poem, has left us a direction, when any one has a right to ſing it, and to make it his own, *Iſa.* xii. 1. *And in that day thou ſhalt ſay.* By looking at the context the time here mentioned appears to be the day of the Lord's power, when the Spirit of life enters into the ſinner, and he is quickened from a death in treſpaſſes and ſins. A happy, eternally happy day. The ſame Spirit will be his comforter; will bring him to the knowledge of his ſalvation through faith in the glorioufly complete work of Immanuel, by which he ſhall

find himſelf freed from guilt and fear, and in Jeſus made a partaker of grace and glory. Then the joy of the holy Ghoſt is felt in his ſoul, and his heart is in tune to bleſs the Lord his God—*O Lord, I will praiſe thee, though thou waſt angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedſt me. Behold, God is my ſalvation; I will truſt and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my ſtrength and my ſong, he alſo is become my ſalvation: therefore with joy ſhall ye draw water out of the wells of ſalvation.* Theſe wells are the fountains of grace, from which the heavenly travellers draw their holy comforts, and with which refreſhed they go on from ſtrength to ſtrength, praiſing Jehovah and aſcribing to him all the glory of their ſalvation. He was angry with them, and juſtly. The fire of his wrath might have burnt to the loweſt hell: and his law, his juſtice, his holineſs, and his truth would have been glorified for ever in their deſtruction. But admired be his mercy, adored be his ſovereign grace, he himſelf found out a way to magnify every divine attribute in their ſalvation. This was the wonderful contrivance of the Three in covenant. The Father accepted his co-equal Son in the place of his people, and his obedience unto death in their ſtead: He is now perfectly reconciled unto them in Jeſus: His anger is turned away from them. And when it is given unto them to know it: and they receive the

comfort of it, when they have joy and peace in believing, O what a day of light and glory then breaks in upon their ſouls---a day ſometimes clouded with the riſing miſts and vapors of the body of ſin, but often ſo bright and ſerene, that the warm beams of the ſun of righteouſneſs ſhine directly into their hearts. Theſe are times of great refreſhing from the preſence of the Lord. The communications of his love are then felt with pure delight: and the ſoul is made ſenſible, that it is in Jeſus an happy partaker of the fulneſs of joy. The man cannot contain his mighty bliſs; but breaks out aloud into thanks, and calls upon the byſtanders to admire the marvellous goodneſs of God. *Behold*, ſee here a miracle of grace---*God is my ſalvation*---wonder with me at the exceeding riches of this love---Why me! What am I, that the moſt high God ſhould be my Saviour? I am ſure he never ſet his love upon one more unworthy, nor plucked any brand out of the burning, that was fitter fewel for hell-fire. O help me then, angels and men, to praiſe and adore that infinite mercy, which contrived, wrought out, and has now applied to me this ſalvation with all its bleſſings. My debt increaſes, and I want to praiſe him more: for in that unſpeakable gift of his Son he gave me all things, and he has now given me faith, and has put me into poſſeſſion. I have his word for it, and I believe it---a word of infallible

fallible truth, confirmed by promiſe, ratified by the covenant oath of the bleſſed Trinity. Theſe engagements cannot be broken, therefore *I will truſt and not be afraid.* On the part of the divine covenanters all is ſure. They have given me the fulleſt ſecurity, that can be, and I may take the comfort of it. They will never leave me nor forſake me, and my faith ſhall not fail. Bleſſed promiſe! I ſhall be kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation. Glory be to *the Lord Jehovah, who is my ſtrength*—his almighty arm holds me up, and therefore *he is my ſong*—the ſame arm will carry me ſafe to the end, therefore my heart rejoiceth in him, and with my ſong will I praiſe him. I will make my boaſt of his ſtrength: All the day long will I be telling of his ſalvation. How can I mention too often theſe infinite mercies of my God? I love to dwell on the delightful theme. It warms my heart, it inflames mine affections, and raiſes my ſoul to heaven. My joys are all in this one—*He alſo is become my ſalvation:* He is my preſent ſalvation: for he has opened the fountain, and has opened my heart to receive the life-giving ſtreams. How can I but bleſs and adore his holy name, while I am *with joy drawing water out of the wells of ſalvation.*

O ye bleſſed of the Lord, who have received the ſame ſalvation out of the infinite fountain of divine grace, aſſiſt me to praiſe. Your rejoicing

with

with me will increaſe my joys, and improve my thankfulneſs. So it follows in the prophet---*In that day ſhall YE ſay*---YE, not one only as before; but the many partakers of the ſame mercies will ſing in chorus. They will join in ſocial worſhip and with one heart unite in the common tribute of praiſe.. *Praiſe ye the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted: ſing unto the Lord: for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and ſhout, thou inhabitant of Sion: for great is the holy One of Iſrael in the midſt of thee.* Great he is indeed, infinitely---everlaſtingly great in himſelf---and to be admired for his excellent greatneſs in ſaving ſinners. This is his greateſt work, and it demands of them their higheſt praiſe: and they are glad to give it him. Happy are they now, when humble and poor in ſpirit they can exalt their Saviour God: but who can tell, how happy they ſhall be, when he ſhall exalt them, and make them partakers of his own happineſs? Eternal ſalvation will demand the tribute of their eternal praiſe; and they will be moſt bleſſedly employed in paying it, when they ſhall return to Sion with ſongs, and everlaſting joy ſhall be upon their heads. Crowned heads may well ſing: for their coronation day will laſt for ever, and the king of kings will put ſuch honor upon his royal friends, that all heaven will ring with his praiſes. They

will with one heart and one voice adore God the Lamb; whoſe gracious hand wiped away all tears from their eyes, and made ſorrow and ſighing flee away for ever; and who gave them his joy and gladneſs, ſuch as are even in heaven inexpreſſible, and will be to eternity full of glory.

O my God, accept of my poor mite. I deſire to join all the redeemed in earth and heaven in bleſſing and praiſing thee at all times. I would give thee praiſe continually with my heart and with my mouth. I would rejoice in thee, and in nothing but thee: for thou art my God, my ſupreme good, and mine everlaſting portion. Let me then for thy mercies ſake glory in praiſing thee henceforth and for ever. I aſcribe it to thee now with a glad heart, rejoicing in hope, that my praiſe will be better ere long and never ceaſing. Thou art worthy of all that angels and men can pay: to thee, holy Father, with the Son and Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah be equal and endleſs praiſe. To this I give my hearty *Amen*.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The believer walks humbly with God bearing his croſs.

THE happy believer is now advanced a great way in his journey. He has been brought to the ſaving knowledge of God---has received faith in his reconciled God in Jeſus--has been taught by the Spirit to love his God--and has found the bleſſedneſs of holy communion with him in the way of obedience and duty, which makes him go on rejoicing; then it is become fit and proper, that his faith and love ſhould be tried. He muſt expect it. It is to the honor of God, to the good of others, and to the eſtabliſhing of thoſe graces, that proof ſhould be made of them, and that they ſhould be put, like gold, into the furnace. This is only a refiner's fire. If the furnace be very hot, one ſeven times more than it was wont to be heated, the gold will loſe nothing. Sterling grace is purer and brighter for every fiery trial. Its enemies, who blow the flame, have no intention to refine it, and ſometimes the believer himſelf cannot ſee how the means will anſwer the end: But God over-rules every trial for his glory, and the believer's good, and makes it more precious, than that of gold which periſheth. Troubles, oppoſition from within and from without, all the difficulties he

can meet with, only ſerve to purge out his droſs, and to render him more fit for his heavenly walk. Herein the grace of God is moſt marvellous. Such a power, as brought light out of darkneſs, is continually directing and ſanctifying the croſſes of the believer, ſo that not one of them can ſtop him; nay the greateſt of them, help him forward in his journey, and bring him not only more ſafely, but alſo more happily to the end of it. Adored for ever be the Father's love, which makes all things work together for his children's good.

When man was in paradiſe, there was nothing in him but what was conformed to the image of God. His will was one with the will of God. In this ſtate there was no croſs. Harmony ruled in the innocent breaſt. And God looked on his favourite man with delight. They were perfectly agreed, and they walked together in holy and happy friendſhip. But when man fell, then ſin brought in ſorrow, in the ten thouſand miſeries which the body ſuffers, and in the entire corruption of the faculties of the ſoul, particularly of the will, now at enmity with the will of God. Hence our croſſes. Sin is their fruitful parent; and while we are in a body of ſin and of death, we cannot be exempt from ſuffering: For man is born to trouble, as naturally as the ſparks fly upwards: but the unregenerate man does not feel the cauſe of this. He has no ſpiritual ſenſes. He is dead to God. He does not

not know, why he ſuffers, and he is not ſenſible of what he deſerves to ſuffer, therefore he goes on merrily, laughing and ſinging under a load of guilt, enough to ruin a thouſand worlds. But when the ſpirit of life enters into him, and he is made to ſee his ſtate, to feel his guilt, and to fear his danger, then he begins to groan under the croſs. Every day he diſcovers, how totally he was fallen, and departed in heart from the living God. He now taſtes the bitterneſs of ſin, and finds the deadly fruits of it. Altho' there be a remedy provided to bring the wanderers home, and he is made acquainted with it, yet he is without ſtrength to apply it. He cannot by believing take the comfort of it. When it is given him to believe, he ſtill has ſin and ſuffering to exerciſe his faith. Againſt his corruptions and temptations he muſt be continually fighting the good fight of faith. From this warfare he can have no diſcharge, but by death. He muſt take to himſelf the whole armor of God, and be under arms night and day, or he will never be able to reſiſt the aſſaults of evil ſpirits, or to overcome the oppoſition of evil men. This is the heritage of all the ſervants of the Lord. All that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus ſhall ſuffer perſecution. If they be on the Lord's ſide, all his enemies will certainly be theirs; ſo that if they enter into his kingdom, it muſt be through much tribulation. The king himſelf went this way to the crown, bearing his croſs; and he

has

has assured us there is no other way—" Whoso-
" ever doth not bear his cross, and come after
" me, CANNOT be my disciple"—he must deny himself what by nature he loves, and must love what by nature he hates, unless he live in this state of self-denial, which is to be his daily cross, he cannot live in communion with me, as one of my disciples. If he be one of the highest of them, yet he must carry his cross: for he has still a fallen nature, and its senses and appetites are always lusting against the will of God, and it is like plucking out a right eye to deny them their gratifications and to refuse them their much coveted pleasures. He is in a body of sin and death, and must carry his cross to his grave, being liable to all the sufferings which mortality is heir to, and all the way mortified under them, because he cannot bear them without faith, nor hold out without patience, and these graces are not of himself, but are the gift of God. He is also forced to carry another cross all his days, even the corruption of his nature, depraved in every faculty, and always inclined to evil. This is the burden and grief of the children of God, under which they all groan. And a sore and heavy burden it is, heavier for being continual, and for its always working against the grace and glory of the Lord Christ: for this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated, and appears in nothing more, than in their adulterous love to their own righteousness,

of

of which they are ſo dotingly fond, that after the holy Spirit has divorced them from it, and their maker is become their huſband, even the Lord their RIGHTEOUSNESS, yet ſtill an unlawful attachment to their own righteouſneſs remains, and is the cauſe of the greateſt croſſes and of the heavieſt trials they meet with in their way to heaven.

Hence the croſs becomes neceſſary for the whole nature of fallen man, for body and ſoul. The ſenſual appetites are continually ſeeking their gratification in unlawful things, and the ſpiritual faculties are full of blind pride, and ſelf righteouſneſs, and know no way to the divine favor, but by their own works and goodneſs. The croſs is indiſpenſably needful to mortify the fleſh with its affections and luſts, and to crucify the vanity of the mind, that when it would glory, it would have nothing left to glory in but the Lord. In this light let us conſider the infinite love, which appointed the outward croſs for the outward man, and the inward croſs for the inward man and let us ſee, how by each of them communion with God is preſerved, and the believer is helped forward in his bleſſed journey.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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